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TOWARDS SOCIALIST SOCIETY

ACHARYA NARENDRA DEVA

EDITED BY BRAHMANAND

CENTRE OF APPLIED POLITICS

By the same author
National Revolution and Socialism
Rastriyata aur Smajwad
Buddha Dharm Ka Dharsan

*Dedicated
to
Jayaprakash Narayan
who reawakened the
Indian people for
Total Revolution*

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Foreword

To remember Acharya Narendra Deva and his ideals is to recall all that is virtuous in our public life. He symbolised selfless sacrifice in the service of society. His spirit of dedication and faith in the ultimate victory of the common man provided him the strength to face all the odds and troubles coming his way. He reached the pinnacle of intellect. He made contributions that brought him glory in the fields of thought and action without expecting anything in return for himself. He had an analytical mind and analysed the social forces operating in society. The logic of the situation led him to choose the path of struggle in order to reconstruct a new social order based on social justice, equality and economic freedom. It is not enough to say that Acharyaji was a great scholar nor is it enough to say that he was a doyen of the socialist movement. Whatever expressions are used for him are not enough to describe the man. His rare qualities were recognised by all his contemporaries and those who came in his contact. I had met Acharyaji only a few years before his death. As I was much impressed by his personality, I may not be objective in my assessment of the man. However, Jawaharlal Nehru has aptly described Acharyaji, thus: "He was a man of rare distinction—distinction in many fields—rare in spirit, rare in mind and intellect, rare in integrity of mind and otherwise. Only his body failed him."

Acharyaji was never in good health. He suffered all his life. But his spirit was never daunted by physical suffering. His source of inspiration was the Buddhist philosophy, combined with the Marxist ideology. Acharyaji imbibed in himself the spirit of human treasure and developed compassion for the poor, the downtrodden and the exploited. His deep conviction in the equality of man made him a socialist in action. Not only that, he always believed in modern and scientific orientation of the experiences of the past and was always ready to learn from the contemporary experiences in various countries of the world. This enabled him to bring about the synthesis between Marxism and Buddhism. While he accepted the class

struggle as spelt out by Marx, he underlined the importance of morality in human life as propounded by Buddha.

Political work was not for him the means to gain power, much less for himself. He never aspired to gain a position in the political field. It was not impossible for him to have achieved material gains, only if he had so desired.

When Mahatma Gandhi went to deliver the Convocation address at Kashi Vidyapith, he met Acharyaji for the first time and was highly impressed by him. Gandhiji told Sri Prakasa: "You have kept hidden such a jewel of a man and never spoken to me about him."

Acharyaji did not believe in preaching what he did not believe and practise himself. Whenever there was any question of political ethics and morality in public life, he himself excelled in setting the standards. In 1948, when he decided to part company with the Congress, he resigned from the State Assembly of UP on moral ground and contested the election again as a candidate of the Socialist Party. Whatever happened during this by-election was both sad and sordid. His rivals stooped low to secure Acharyaji's defeat. Although defeated, he carried bitterness against none. The news of his defeat never unnerved him. He never intended to get elected by questionable means. While explaining his reasons for his resignation, he said in the UP Assembly:

"It is not material goods to which we advance our claim. This treasure consists of ideals and noble objectives. The succession of such noble treasure is not governed by the law of primogeniture nor by the rule that lays down equal sharing amongst legal heirs. The personal law of communities has no application here. Only those can inherit this property who prove themselves worthy of it—by their conduct and faith."

He always maintained this attitude for establishing new traditions in our parliamentary democracy.

Acharyaji always believed that political freedom without economic emancipation of the toiling masses is incomplete. His commitment to social change was neither emotional nor romantic. He was a socialist by conviction and his commitment to social change was backed by sound and scientific analysis. He shared the urge of the Indian people to liberate themselves from slavery in order to secure economic freedom. To him, the concept of political freedom was projection of economic freedom. He therefore emphasised from the very beginning the need to give economic contents to the freedom movement by broadening the social base of political parties and by enlisting the support of the peasants and the

working class through class struggles. Above all, he sought to create a revolutionary leadership that consciously strove for social transformation. He wrote: "It is not enough that we have attained freedom. We have to gain full benefits of freedom on a revolutionary basis. The revolution is to be the main pivot of our social structure. I do not mean a bloody revolution. A revolution does not necessarily employ violence. It can be peaceful as well."

Acharya Narendra Deva had deep understanding of our social traditions and their constraints on our public life. He fully understood the dangerous consequences of the caste system. To him the caste system was class-antagonism in our society. He therefore held that effective and deliberate measures should be taken to transform caste conflicts into a class struggle. Keeping this in view, he insisted that the Congress Party should adopt a clear-cut economic programme. Even during the independence movement Acharya Narendra Deva fought for changing the class character of the Congress. If this did not happen, the Congress might turn into an organisation of "social climbers" and opportunists. He always pointed out this danger to the Congress leadership and he wanted them to evolve an economic policy for social transformation. In 1948, soon after Independence, he found his apprehensions about the Congress had come true.

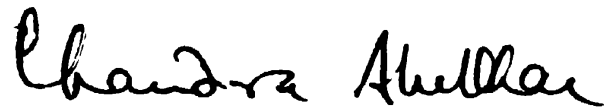
For him, a political organisation was an instrument for social transformation. He never believed in the politics of manoeuvre and manipulation to achieve. He was therefore in search of a suitable political party for ushering in socialism in the country. It is regrettable that his dreams have not been realised. Further, he could not create a socialist organisation of his dreams during his life-time. Even so, he continued his relentless efforts to build the party unmindful of his failing health. He stuck to his mission defying the advice of his doctors and friends.

He had no enemy in politics. For, he always valued principles in public life. He was respected and adorned by all those who came in his contact. He never believed in personal encounters but never fought shy of political confrontation to advance the socialist cause. In discharging his public duties he had no consideration of personal relationship. He stood like a rock to face any challenge.

Acharya Narendra Deva lived the life of a fighter as well as a saint. At a time when the values of our political life are fast eroding, the life and ideals of Acharya Narendra Deva beckon all of us to a new direction in developing healthy trends in the political field. At this juncture, if our people, especially the younger generation, are provided the opportunity to study Acharyaji's life and writings, they will draw new inspiration and help in creating a better society.

The Centre of Applied Politics has made but a simple attempt in this

direction. The book is a collection of his speeches and articles written on various occasions. The credit for compilation goes to Shri Brahmanand, who made sincere efforts in collecting Acharyaji's writings from various sources. Without his dedication and hard work it would not have been possible to bring out this volume. I also owe a word of thanks to Shri Suresh Bhatnagar, Special Correspondent, Patriot, for his valuable cooperation and help. Dr Harideva Sharma, History (Oral) Department, Nehru Memorial Museum and Library, Shri A. K. Awasthi and our printer, Shri Veerendra Malik deserve my hearty thanks for their help. I am grateful to all of them for their sincere efforts.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Chandra Shekhar". The script is fluid and cursive, with the first letter 'C' being particularly large and stylized.

CHANDRA SHEKHAR

Editor's Note

“Politics is a very strange thing. In politics friends become foes”, said Narendra Deva. He was not wailing over his separation from the Congress Party; he had only realised the truth. The words expressed his anguish and pain at power politics having eclipsed the process of a social revolution in the country. Power changes a man completely. It makes him draw a line of distinction between what he calls “pragmatism” and idealism. It makes him prefer expediency in politics; and he uses idealism only as a camouflage to hide his pursuit of selfish ends. Even a friend becomes an enemy. This has perhaps been the nature of the game of power politics from time immemorial; but it is much more so in an underdeveloped country.

On 30 January 1948 Mahatma Gandhi fell to an assassin's bullet. The whole nation was plunged in sorrow. In less than two months after that grim event in March 1948, the Socialists decided to quit the Congress. The Socialists formally took the decision at their sixth annual conference at Nasik. Why did the Socialist Party decide to quit the Congress so soon after Gandhi's passing?

This present volume is not the story of an individual. It is concerned with a tragic drama enacted during and after the freedom movement, a contemptible affair which has still kept millions of people in our country starved, half-naked and illiterate. Narendra Deva was one of those who suffered in that tragic drama. He was not just an individual; he was an institution in himself. The aim of the present volume is to take the lid off the dirty game of power politics and to expose the conspiracy of the ruling *elite*, a game which might have helped certain self-seeking men but which definitely harmed the poor millions in our country.

In May 1947, Gandhi held a series of talks with the Congress and Socialist leaders to evolve a plan for the development of the country. He did not want the Socialist leaders to quit the Congress. “Mahatma Gandhi,” wrote Narendra Deva, “was of the view that though freedom was

achieved, the Congress should remain a national organization and that the parties should be allowed to function within the Congress.”

Why did the Congress leaders hasten, in the wake of Gandhi’s passing, to adopt a new constitution forbidding the Socialists to function as a group within the Congress? At the time of his death, Gandhi was preoccupied with the problem of reconstruction of Indian polity. So were the Socialist leaders. The Congress leaders, however, were more intent on the task of consolidating their own strength. They were under the spell of their newly acquired power. Gandhi sensed the danger. He sought to keep the national movement alive by preventing the Congress being converted into a political party.

When Acharya J.B. Kripalani resigned the presidentship of the Congress in 1947, a search began for a new person to take his place. Gandhi suggested that either Jayaprakash Narayan or Narendra Deva should be persuaded to take up the post. Jawaharlal Nehru first agreed to the name of Narendra Deva. Later, however, he started having second thoughts. Indeed the name proved a bitter pill for the Congress leaders to swallow. Gandhi did not understand the subtleties of the power game going on behind the scenes. How could the Congress leaders accept Narendra Deva as Congress President? They obviously wanted someone who would fall in line with them. Their choice naturally went in favour of Rajendra Prasad. Gandhi—the man who had led India to freedom—was now irrelevant to them. He might be worshipped after his death. A statue or a memorial might be set up to perpetuate his memory as in the case of the other *gurus* and religious leaders. This was perhaps in line with the Indian style and the Indian tradition. The Congress leaders understood it quite well.

Serious polemics ensued in the party. Should the party be under the control of the Government? Or should it function independently of the Government? The Congress leaders had their own views on the subject. Gandhi felt that just because the Congress was in office, there should be no let-up in its work among the people. “Its extra-governmental activities” said he, “alone could make it possible to realize the Thoreauvian ideal: That Government is the best which governs the least.” Nehru on the other hand pleaded for an “establishment of a strong central authority in as large a part of India as possible. It is a task that governmental agencies alone can adequately handle. The Congress organization is in bad shape; it cannot be improved except by altering the general atmosphere in the country. And that obviously can be done only by governmental agencies.”

Narendra Deva supported Gandhi. In an editorial in *Sangharsh* Narendra Deva wrote: “To get the people’s co-operation for national reconstruction is an important task. The Government depends on its own

official agency to carry out its work.”¹ A party organization was a communication channel between the people and the Government. If it broke down, the masses would be alienated from the Government.

When Nehru was fighting for independence, he had held a different view on party-Ministry relations. He had said: “It is manifest that the Congress is more important than any Ministry. Ministries may come or go, but the Congress goes on till it fulfils its historic mission of achieving national independence for India.” But after assuming power, his views had changed. Power has its own logic. To the Congress leaders Gandhi had outlived his utility. “Gandhi,” wrote Louis Fischer, “had been defeated by the Congress machine and by the keymen in the Government.”³

Gandhi’s presence made it impossible for the rulers to take action against the Socialists. With his death the barrier was gone. It was time for the Congress leaders to give vent to their feeling. N.V. Gadgil said: “The socialists would be liquidated like the communists if they come in their way.” When the new constitution was adopted, the Socialist leaders were naturally left with no alternative but to quit the Congress. Speaking at the Nasik Conference in 1948, Narendra Deva said:

I have been so far advocating that we should not quit the Congress. Today I am telling you that we must get out of the Congress;...It is not that we are in a hurry to quit the Congress. The Congress is compelling us to get out of it. Once the Congress President asked us to drop the prefix “Congress” from our party name. He also pleaded that our party doors be thrown open to non-congressmen. He suggested that this would enable us to continue in Congress. We did all that he wanted at Kanpur in 1946. Today they have adopted a constitution which has left us no other alternative.

Narendra Deva had no regret about leaving the Congress. The cause that had inspired him to enter politics was dearer to him than power. How to further the cause was his foremost anxiety. He looked upon power not as an end in itself but as a means to bring about social change.

Narendra Deva was born at Sitapur in the United Provinces in a well-to-do and educated family. Scholarship was no new thing for him; he had inherited it from his parents. His grandfather was a professor of English; his father was a lawyer.

A few years after Narendra Deva’s birth, his father shifted to Fayzabad and set up practice there. He was a profound scholar and took great interest in his son.

While Narendra was still a child, he came into intimate contact with

1. Narendra Deva was at this time editor of the Hindi Weekly *Sangharsh* published from Lucknow
2. Michael Brecher, *Nehru: A Political Biography* (London, 1961), p. 239
3. Louis Fischer, *The Life of Mahatma Gandhi* (London, 1951), pt 2, p. 239

Dattatray Bhikaj Ranade, an eminent Sanskrit scholar, who was a teacher in his school. He learnt Pali and Bengali as well in his boyhood. After his matriculation, he went to Allahabad to study for the B.A. Degree. He lived there in the Hindu Boarding House, which was a centre of extremist thought. "For the first time," he wrote, "I became a convert to the leftist ideology." He heard speeches here by Lala Lajpat Rai, G.K. Gokhale, Bipin Chandra Pal, and Haidar Raza. He became a regular reader of *Bande Mataram*. Aurobindo Ghosh used to write regularly then for this journal, and the writings made a deep impact on young Narendra Deva. The revolutionary Narendra Deva was in the making.

After graduating from Allahabad, Narendra Deva went to Banaras. His father wanted him to study law. Narendra Deva, however, had "no liking for that profession." His ambition was to enrol himself as a research scholar in archaeology. When he could not get admission in the Department, he switched to law. But he had already made up his mind. "I studied law," he said, "with the sole idea of participating in politics while practising." He took his LL.B. degree in 1915 and went back to Fayzabad. Narendra Deva did not like the profession of a lawyer. He was fond of two things in life—scholarship and politics. He had developed these interests even while he was a child, thanks to his association with his parents. He was waiting for an opportunity. When the Kashi Vidyapith was founded in Banaras in the wake of the civil disobedience launched by Mahatma Gandhi he was offered the job of a lecturer. Convinced that the system of education adopted in India would not be of any help to his cause of independence, Gandhi had called for an alternative system of education. Under his inspiration many national educational institutions had come up in India—the Gujarat Vidyapith in Gujarat, the Bihar Vidyapith in Patna, and the Kashi Vidyapith in Banaras. Narendra Deva did not take much time to decide to join the Kashi Vidyapith. He was only a lecturer in the beginning. However, in view of his learning and scholarship, he succeeded Dr Bhagwan Das, another intellectual giant of his time, as the head of the institution. His salary was just Rs. 150 a month. Yet the job was to his liking; for it gave him an opportunity to combine study with politics.

In September-October 1929 Gandhi went to the United Provinces. During his tour he also addressed the annual convocation at the Kashi Vidyapith. Narendra Deva met Gandhi for the first time. Gandhi was immediately impressed by Narendra Deva. He said: "Sri Prakasa, how is it that you have kept such a jewel of a man hidden from me and have never spoken to me about him?"

Sri Prakasa: "Mahatmaji, jewels do not go hunting for their admirers; it is for the men who want them to go in search of them."⁴

⁴ *Acharya Narendra Deva A Commemoration Volume*. (edited by B.V. Keskar and V.L.N. Menon), p. 123.

Narendra Deva had already given shape to the contours of his career at Allahabad; for he wrote:

“My thoughts had matured at Allahabad; there I got a new viewpoint of life.” The political situation in the country was changing fast. Gandhi had emerged on the political scene. He gave an altogether new direction to the Congress. The First World War had ended. Its impact, together with that of the great economic depression in 1927, had left a serious scar on the Indian economy. Being a colony, the whole burden of the war was shifted by its rulers to its colony. The prices of primary goods went down. The people underwent hardship and suffering. Colonial rule had already wrecked India’s economy. But the two events, coming in quick succession, broke its back. They intensified the process of pauperization in the country. But the Russian Revolution provided a ray of hope to suffering humanity.

In 1918, an organization called the Kisan Sabha was organized in the Allahabad District, and under its leadership the peasants started asserting themselves. They demanded, among other things, (1) restriction on eviction; (2) restriction on forced labour; (3) an end to the practice of imposing fines; and (4) an end to illegal extractions. The movement soon gathered momentum. In 1921 the peasants launched what was called *Eka Andolan*, mainly in the districts of Hardoi, Kira, Sitapur, and Lucknow. They attacked the Government and the *talukdars*. The situation thus took a revolutionary turn in the country. How could Narendra Deva remain uninfluenced by such epoch-making events? They were bound to evoke a response from him.

Narendra Deva started advocating a broadening of the social base of the Congress by enlisting the support of the small peasants, the working class, and the small artisans in the village. He believed in the Marxian theory of class struggle. However, in the light of his own experience of the Indian problems, he called for (1) the adoption of an economic programme; (2) the building up of a revolutionary leadership; and (3) class organization.

In August 1928 Jawaharlal Nehru, Subhas Chandra Bose, and Zakir Husain formed a body called the Independence for India League. The League stood for the “full independence” of the people of India. Nehru was the main spirit behind it. He was even prepared, as he stated in a letter to V. Chattopadhyaya on 27 September 1928, to resign from the Secretaryship of the Congress to work for the League. Perhaps he felt that his “work for the independence for India League might conflict with Congress policy.”⁵ He wanted to give a new orientation to the Congress programme. He was not happy about a Dominion status constitution being granted to

5. *Selected Works of Jawaharlal Nehru* (New Delhi, 1972), Vol. III, p. 70

India. This was how the League had started.

Narendra Deva was in charge of this League in the United Provinces. He was, however, sceptical about the utility of an organization like the League. On 9 February 1929, in a letter to Nehru, he wrote: "People naturally want to know what the new basis will be and what means the League will employ to secure the object." He held the view that "the League should have an economic programme.... We may all generally believe in the necessity of reconstructing our society on a new basis but so long as we have no clear conception of the social and economic theories on the basis of which the society is to be remodelled and so long we cannot hope to obtain any results." Mere political independence is not enough for the country. He, therefore, wanted the League to define clearly the basis on which it would reconstruct society and the means it would employ to secure its objects. In the Indian context political independence was inseparable from the economic freedom of the people political freedom was only an extension of economic freedom.

Narendra Deva made a distinction between the growth of nationalism in Europe and in India. In Europe, nationalism might be the product of industrialism; but in India it was not so. When capitalism established itself in Europe, India like other underdeveloped countries became a colony. Colonialism was based on exploitation. Industrialism had been built up in Great Britain at the cost of India. India's backwardness and poverty mainly stemmed from the colonial system. The colonial system had created its own vested interests, such as the Indian princes, the feudal lords, the capitalists, and the bureaucracy. They were the main pillars of the British empire in India.

Nationalism in India was the result of the people's urge to fight against British imperialism and break the shackles of slavery. It was identified as much with economic as the political freedom.

Presiding over the conference of the Gujarat Congress Socialist Party, in June 1935 Narendra Deva said:

In view of the fact that foreign imperialism has, with the object of retrenching its position, formed a bloc with forces of native reaction—namely the Indian princes, landlords, and capitalists—it is all the more necessary for us to rally all the radical elements in the country and to build a united front of the petty *bourgeoisie*, the workers, and the peasants in order to oppose this newly constituted bloc of imperialism and its native allies.⁶

He further argued that "Socialism alone stands for the fullest democracy. Democracy of the capitalist order is a sham democracy. Political

6 Acharya Narendra Deva

Socialism and the National Revolution. (Bombay, 1940) p 68

democracy is meaningless and farcical unless it is accompanied by economic equality and unless it stands for the economic emancipation of the masses.”⁷

There was not much difference between Nehru and Narendra Deva so far as the policy and the programme of the League were concerned. “The League came into existence,” Nehru wrote, “primarily for the ideal of independence, but it was clearly felt at the time and repeatedly stated that mere political independence is not enough. In our objectives, therefore, we deliberately included the reconstruction of Indian society on the basis of social and economic equality.”⁸

The UP branch of the Indian League held a meeting at Farrukhabad on 31 March and 1 April 1929 and adopted a programme. Narendra Deva’s efforts were bearing fruit. He had an attack of asthma on 21 March 1929. Not with standing his illness, he attended the meeting of the League. This League, however, was a short-lived one. After Nehru was elected President of the Congress the League faded away. Had the League achieved its objectives? Why then did the League just fade away?

Narendra Deva was, however, in search of “men of dedication and conviction.” He had chosen the path of struggle to establish a new social order in the country, and he remained firm as a rock in his resolve throughout his life. There were two important ingredients in Narendra Deva’s personality—the example of the Buddha and the thought of Karl Marx. Both the Buddha and Marx initiators of social change. The Buddha had sought to change man individually whereas Marx had insisted on a change in the social structure. Recent experience had proved that each was incomplete without the other. Change should be brought about both at the individual level and at the social level simultaneously. Narendra Deva combined in himself the essence of the ideas enunciated by the two great thinkers.

Narendra Deva’s scholarship was another dimension of his personality. While his scholarship gave him insights into the problems, his actual participation in the national movement and in the tasks of national reconstruction brought him face to face with the actual challenges.

In 1933 many young Congress leaders found themselves interned together in Nasik Jail. These leaders included Jayaprakash Narayan, Minoo R. Masani, Achyut Patwardhan, Asoka Mehta, and a few others. They were not happy over the policy and the programme of civil disobedience. In the light of the discussions they held in jail they decided to form a new group in the Congress. This was how the Congress Socialist Party was born at Nasik.

7. *UP Legislative Assembly, Debates*, 31 July 1937.

8. *Selected Works of Jawaharlal Nehru* (New Delhi, 1972), Vol. 3. p. 282

JP had taken the responsibility of organizing the Congress Socialist Party after his release from prison. In May 1934 the Congress Socialist Party held a conference at Patna to give concrete shape to the organization. JP persuaded Narendra Deva to preside over the conference. The two leaders expressed their determination to give a new direction to the Congress. They wanted to build the Congress as an effective anti-imperialist front. They were also anxious to ensure that the Socialists did not remain aloof from the mainstream of the struggle against imperialism and liberation of the country.

Speaking at the conference, Narendra Deva said that "the masses were the class of the future," that the Socialists had an important role to play in "widening the social base of our national movement," and that such a widening of the social bases could be achieved only "by formulating economic policies for the welfare of the masses." Being a Marxist, he looked upon the fight for Socialism as inseparable from the struggle for political independence. He said he visualised a link-up of the economic struggle with "the national struggle"; for it would give "social content to the national struggle." According to him, "mass action" was as important as "political action." No political action was possible without mass action. The poor peasants in the country could not get rid of their suffering without political action; so the fight for independence could not be waged without mass action. Narendra Deva, therefore, held that the Congress was as important as the Kisan Sabha. Through coordination of the activities of these two organizations one could build a strong anti-imperialist force in the country which would also pave the way for the introduction of Socialism. The peasantry, Narendra Deva declared, would be the backbone of such an anti-imperialist force in the country.

There was another equally important reason behind Narendra Deva's plea for a widening of the social base of the movement. In Europe at this time parliamentary institutions had collapsed. This was because capitalist democracy had a narrow social base which always kept the fate of democracy hanging in the balance. No constitution could by itself provide a sound foundation for democracy. Democracy would not take root unless it was accompanied by economic equality, unless the social base was broadened, and unless there was "economic emancipation of the masses."

Narendra Deva issued an appeal for building up powerful class organizations and for intensifying the class struggle in the country. Notwithstanding his frail constitution and poor health he threw himself whole-heartedly into the national movement. In 1930 he was in prison and was detained at Basti. Basti is situated in the foothills of the Himalayas. Narendra Deva, as we have already noted, was already an asthma patient. The climate of Basti did not suit him, and he was taken ill. He was

bedridden for some time. He was fighting both against his ill-health and against the mighty power of British imperialism.

The political situation in India once more took a sharp turn with the decision of the British Parliament to enforce a new constitution. A serious controversy ensued in the Congress. Should the Congress accept the new constitution or not? Should it contest the elections or not? Should it agree to form the Government or not? The leaders were sharply divided over these issues. Nehru maintained a rather inconsistent and contradictory position, pointing to the direction in which he was drifting away. He might have been an "ideologue of left nationalism" earlier, but he was now a changed man. "The hero of the Left" was faltering; he was in two minds. In 1936 he was re-elected President of the Congress. In his presidential speech at Lucknow he described the Government of India Act 1935, as a Charter of Slavery, as a piece of legislation which sought "to strengthen the bonds of imperialist domination and to intensify the exploitation of the masses." He held that "the elections should be contested," but at the same time "spurned" the idea of accepting office. The entire presidential speech was an eloquent exposition of his radicalism aimed at the leaders of the Left wing in the Congress. How then could he reconcile his retreat from acceptance of office by the Congress with his previous stand? He was, however, bold enough to say that "acceptance of office does not mean by an iota acceptance of the slave constitution." All this was typical of Nehru's personality.

Why did the Socialist leaders part company with their godfather, Jawaharlal Nehru? The Socialists were especially concerned about the fact of the poverty in the country. They had embraced Socialism on account of the economic situation in the country. The Congress leaders, however, looked upon poverty in India "as a political grievance." They sought to explain it away either in terms of the heavy drain of wealth from India or look at it from the point of view of power-politics. They would not realize that poverty was a factor inherent in the economic structure then obtaining in the country. No solution short of revolutionary change could eliminate poverty.

Narendra Deva saw the problem in its true perspective. He insisted on the need to give an economic and social content to the struggle for national liberation. In his view, to separate the political question from the social question was an act of fraud on the suffering millions of India. Even today one can witness the confusion over the relationship between the political and social questions. It is impossible to protect liberty unless the nation is prepared to make fundamental changes in the way of life based on the colonial system. Narendra Deva had raised this basic question long before Independence. And yet the problem seems to be as alive today as it was then.

Even after thirty years of freedom the authorities seem to be at a loss. They are still not able to resolve the question of law and order. A few days ago, on 23 September 1978, the Chief Ministers of the various States met in a conference in Delhi. They discussed, among other things, the deteriorating law-and-order situation in the country. *The Statesman* published a report under the caption "States Want to Keep Police Morale High." It sounds ridiculous. Is the question of law and order an exclusive function of the police? Can any one improve the situation merely by recruiting more policemen?

Narendra Deva made a distinction between "the positive State" and "the police State." Speaking at the College of Social Science at Kanpur, he said: "The age of science has destroyed the concept of God and has replaced it by that of the supremacy of man." He, therefore, suggested that the police State should be transformed into a positive State in the interest of solving the question of law and order.

There were bound to be differences between the Socialists and the Congress leaders about the objectives and hence in their approaches to the problem. The Socialist leaders were bound to reject the new constitution provided under the Government of India Act, 1935. They would not fall for the idea of accepting office within the framework of the new constitution. Their insistence on an economic programme and their policy of struggle stemmed from their commitment to Socialism. They were not prepared to negotiate or compromise with the British for India's independence. The lure of power and prestige, however, proved too great for the Congress leaders.

Why did Nehru prefer to align himself with the Congress old guards? Why did he not like to identify himself with the Socialists? "He retained", wrote Brecher, "his status as Congress mediator and the power flowing from his friendly links with all sections of the Party."⁹ In the Lucknow session, Nehru sponsored many radical measures, but the All-India Congress Committee ultimately either "rejected or drastically modified" those measures. It turned down even his proposal for collective affiliation of peasants' and workers' organizations. Nehru did not choose to fight it out. He said: "I have no desire to force the issue in the Congress and thereby create difficulties in the way of our struggle for independence." Expediency determined his flexibility.

On 1 April 1937 the Provincial part of the Government India Act, 1935, came into force. The Congress fought the elections and also formed the Government in eight Provinces. It was said to be an "experiment in constitutionalism" and lasted two-and-a-half years, i.e. until October 1939. It set the behaviour pattern of the Congress leaders for the future.

9 Brecher; *Nehru. A Political Biography* p. 218.

Constitutionalism cast its shadow across the national struggle.

Commenting on the new Constitution, Narendra Deva said: "... it is clear that the new constitution is a retrograde measure designed to strengthen imperial interests and to tighten further Britain's grip in India."¹⁰ He was in favour of totally rejecting this Constitution. He described it as a "sham constitution," one intended "to perpetuate British domination in India." "But", he said, ...

..the thing that really matters is to see how this policy of rejection is to be carried out. In our opinion the only possible honourable and consistent course open to rejectionists after this declaration is to follow a policy of determined resistance and obstruction and to make it impossible for the new constitution to work. A policy of rejection necessarily implies refusal to accept ministerial and other offices in the Ministry of the Government. It is only in this way that we can expose the hollowness of the constitution and compel its suspension.¹¹

A fight between the Socialists and the Congress leaders was inescapable. The Socialist leaders were up against heavy odds. Nehru maintained in the beginning a dog-in-the-manager policy and ultimately cast his lot with the old guard. This was the beginning of the estrangement between "the godfather and his followers."

Narendra Deva had thought up another means by which to wreck the Constitution. He hoped that the Congress would create a favourable atmosphere for reform by its silent work and prepare the nation for the acceptance of a policy of reform. He wanted the Congress to take steps to redress the grievances of the working class and the peasantry. This period had particularly witnessed a mass awakening among the peasants. They were agitating against the *talukdars* for the redress of their longstanding grievances. Narendra Deva expected the Congress Ministries to "exhaust all the possibilities of the Constitution in order to bring the greatest measure of relief to the masses," but much to his sorrow he found that after assuming power, the Congress had started looking upon "*kisan* organizations and their workers with an eye of suspicion and distrust." The Congress Ministers regarded the Kisan Sabhas as parallel and rival organizations to the Congress Party. He wrote that "much more is possible within the framework of the present Act. But it is regrettable that agrarian reform was being delayed for no good reason." All that the Congress Ministries in the Provinces did was to take a few measures by way of palliatives. They never made an attempt to achieve a breakthrough in the direction of changing the social basis of the land-owning class.

A serious controversy arose among Congressmen in Bihar. In January

10 Acharya Narendra Deva: *Socialism and the National Revolution*, p. 84.

11 *Ibid.*

1938 Swami Sahajanand Saraswati, who was President of the All-India Kisan Sabha resigned from the All-India Congress Committee as a sequel to this controversy. There was an exchange of statements between Rajendra Prasad, who was President of the Bihar Provincial Congress Committee, and Jayaprakash Narayan. The Congress leaders made an issue of violence v. non-violence in order to forestall a possible attempt by the Socialists to take up the cause of the small, landless peasants. They suddenly became enamoured of non-violence; for it came in handy in suppressing the mass awakening of the people. The then Prime Minister of Bihar, the late Srikrishna Sinha, said at the political conference held at Kurtha in Bihar: "I am a friend of landlords and shall always remain their friend."¹² Both Jayaprakash Narayan and Narendra Deva tried their best to convince the Congress leaders that the Congress and the Kisan Sabhas were not antagonistic to each other and that they were, on the contrary, complementary to each other. The Congress leaders chose to remain unconvinced; for they had their own axe to grind. They in fact went so far as to accuse the Socialist leaders of inciting violence. They suddenly became apostles of non-violence.

In a letter to Nehru on 10 December 1937, Narendra Deva wrote:

Truth and non-violence are noble ideas, and as such every decent man must have high regard for them. But I feel that they are so much being misused today in India that the day is not far distant when they will begin to stink in our nostrils. It is extremely vulgar to press them in the service of a wrong cause or to use them light-heartedly for an ulterior object. But that is exactly what is happening today. The expression is just now on the lips of every Minister, who has to defend a weak case and also wants to confuse the public mind on any issue or who wants to justify a course of action which is in direct opposition to the declared policy of the Congress. I may be pardoned for saying that it sometimes so happens that acts which were justified by former Governments in the name of law and order are justified in the name of truth and violence. The present state of affairs is due to the nervousness, indecision, and the terrible fear of the masses, so characteristic of the middle class.

He added:

New problems have arisen as a result of the new awakening and of the acceptance of office by Congressmen, and we must face them boldly. The problems which you mention in your first letter are of most vital concern to us, and the Working Committee should meet early in January as suggested by you to discuss these problems to arrive at definite conclusions. We must adopt a policy which may enable us to consolidate our party.

During this period a series of peasant movements arose in Bihar. The All-India Kisan Sabha held its conference in Gaya in March 1938. Presiding over the conference, Narendra Deva said: "The peasants' isolation has been broken... A revolutionary change has come over his ways of thinking." He, however, warned: "There should, however, be no desire to enter into rivalry with the Congress. We must remember that the two organizations are complementary to each other. Each is strengthened by the support of the other." Once in power, the Congress leaders sought to cling to office. They were afraid to displease the land-owners, who supported British imperialism.

Gandhi held a view different from that of Congressmen. He had no belief in the constitutional method of agitation. He used the constitutional method to impart training to the people and to prepare them for a non-violent struggle. Gandhi's disciples, however, became suddenly more enthusiastic than their *guru*. They valued non-violence only as a strategy; it was not a creed with them. Vallabhbhai Patel moved a resolution at a meeting of the All-India Congress Committee on 27 June 1939, banning the use of *satyagraha* except with the consent of the Provincial Congress Committee concerned. This was typical of the attitude of the Congress leaders in the organization.

Another important consideration weighed with Narendra Deva in favour of *kisan* organizations. The landlords in India were the creation of British rule. As a class they kept aloof from the national movements. The other two pillars of the British Empire—the *bourgeoisie* and the bureaucracy—had developed a vested interest in the continuance of British rule. Moreover, the social base of the pro-imperialist elements—the landlords, the capitalists, and the bureaucracy—was very narrow. Narendra Deva, therefore, held that the social base of the anti-imperialist struggle could be broadened by enlisting the support of the peasantry. He also saw that the indifference of the peasantry could be developed into active support for the freedom movement. He, therefore, sought to persuade the Congress to give up its "policy of isolation."

Though Narendra Deva was elected leader of the Congress Legislature Party in the United Provinces on 31 July 1937, he declined to become the Prime Minister as he was opposed to the decision of the Congress to accept office. He was also President of the Congress in U.P. Nothing could have prevented him from becoming the Prime Minister of his Province. But he held dear the principle of ethics in politics: he must practise what he professed.

The Socialist leaders in the Congress thus wanted to build up the Congress as an efficacious instrument of struggle and to protect it from getting bogged down in constitutionalism; and the Congress leaders were in

favour of *status quoism*. The fight between them became permanent. In Tripuri, the All India Congress Committee set up a sub-committee consisting of the General Secretary of the Congress, Jawaharlal Nehru, Acharya Narendra Deva, and Pattabhi Sitaramayya to draft a new constitution for the Congress. This sub-committee sought to amend the Article 5(e) by inserting the words "or any other" between the words "communal" and "organization". The clause as amended was liable to be misused. Narendra Deva, therefore, submitted a note of dissent. He wrote: "Various political parties within the Congress should have the fullest opportunity to influence and mould the policy of the Congress and as the AICC also functions as the committee for the open session, political groups which are in a minority today still certainly not be in a position to influence the decision of the Congress when the new rule is put into operation." Thus it is evident that there was infighting in the Congress even during the freedom movement. The old guard worked hard to keep the citadel safe from the progressive forces in the Congress. They were interested neither in Socialism nor in the struggle. Though the Government of India had not yet transferred much power to the popular representatives, they seemed to be satisfied with whatever little power they had acquired.

Narendra Deva expected that the Congress would use "the constitution in a revolutionary way to increase the strength." He wrote: "...constitutional crisis can be adequately utilised only when the parliamentary and the extra-parliamentary activities of the Congress are used to arouse the political consciousness of the people. In other words, the masses have to be organized on the basis of their economic demands and their revolutionary mentality developed to a pitch where they are ready to wage the final battle with imperialism."

Power was the only motivation so far as the old guards were concerned. They had tasted power, and they wanted to stick to it at any cost. However, the experiment in constitutionalism proved short-lived; for the Second World War intervened. India was also declared a belligerent country. Serious differences arose in the Congress over the attitude that the organization should adopt towards the war efforts.

Gandhi's objection to any cooperation in the prosecution of the war was based on his belief in *ahimsa*; for "a *satyagrahi* loves his so-called enemy even as his friend. He owns no enemy."¹³ His stand was derived from what he called "the never-drying fountain of non-violence" which his breast had nourished for fifty years.

On 14 September 1939 the Congress Working Committee met at Wardha to decide its stand on the war. It adopted a statement which stated

All India Congress Committee, Allahabad

13 *Congress and the War Crisis*, p. 12.

unequivocally that "the Congress has repeatedly declared its entire disapproval of the ideology and practice of Fascism and Nazism and their glorification of war and violence and the suppression of the human spirit. It has seen in Fascism and Nazism the intensification of the principles of Imperialism against which the Indian people have struggled for many years."¹⁴ The Congress directed its members in the Central Legislative Assembly to abstain from attending its next session as a protest against the war policy of the British Government.

Great Britain declared that it was fighting for the "preservation of democracy, self-determination and the freedom of small nations."¹⁵ During the First World War, too, it had made a similar claim. Yet the colonial rule of Great Britain had never come to an end. It had continued to enter into secret treaties as before—treaties "embodying imperialist designs for carving up of the Ottoman Empire."¹⁶

The Congress said that it would participate in the war if Great Britain decided to end imperialism in its own possessions and established full democracy in India. It also wanted Great Britain to concede to Indian people "the right of self-determination" by allowing them to frame their own constitution through a Constituent Assembly without external interference and to guide their own democracy."¹⁷ It insisted that Great Britain should first declare, "in unequivocal terms, what their aims are in regard to democracy and imperialism and the new order that is envisaged and, in particular, how these aims are going to apply to India..."¹⁸ It was Nehru who prepared the draft.

Commenting on the statement Gandhi said: "the author of the statement is an artist... he is a friend of the English people... He is more English than Indian in his thought and make-up. He is often more at home with Englishmen than with his own countrymen."¹⁹ Left to himself, Gandhi was of the view that "whatever support was to be given to the British should be given unconditionally." The Congress leaders on the other hand thought of using the war as an opportunity to strike a deal with the British Government. On 22 September 1939 Lord Zetland, then Secretary of State for India, who was replying to the debate in the British Parliament, described it as "unfortunate" that the Congress leaders should have chosen "this time to reassert their claims." Nehru was no doubt a good salesman, but, as ill-luck would have it, he was swimming against the current.

On 22 October 1939 the Viceroy made a statement which was an "unequivocal reiteration of the imperialist policy." It came as a shock to

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 15.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 16

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 18

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 20

¹⁹ *Ibid.*

the Congress leaders. Indeed it proved to be the last straw on the camel's back; for the Congress Working Committee was now left with no alternative but to call upon the Congress Ministries in the Provinces to resign.

Nehru, however, stuck to his old policy. He did not want to close the door upon negotiations for ever. And Gandhi, following his own logic, shifted his stand gradually from "unconditional support" to "non-cooperation with the war effort."

The Socialist leaders were opposed to any kind of support for the war, and they maintained this stand till the end. There was, however, a noticeable change in Nehru's thinking. Nehru went to China before the war had started. On 9 September 1959 he hurried back to India to participate in a meeting the Working Committee at Wardha. He was regarded as an expert on war in view of his understanding of international problems. His views on war, however, had differed from time to time. He had himself proposed an anti-war resolution at the Madras session of the Congress in 1927. Similar resolutions had been adopted at his instance and under his inspiration at Lucknow, Faizpur, Haripura, and Tripuri.

Nehru had submitted a report at Haripura on 16 February 1938, and had made it clear that there was no question of India's participation in any imperialist war. He had declared that imperialism and peace were poles apart, and had added: "We are against both Fascism and imperialism. Nor is the army in India a national one. It is an imperialist army and has been kept to suppress the movement."²⁰

How come, then, that he suddenly became concerned about the war in Europe? Nehru's stand on war upset the Socialists. According to Narendra Deva,

Who started the war cannot determine its character. This war is not so much between democracy and Fascism as between Fascism and imperialism in order to divide the world. The countries belonging to capitalist democracy are satiable nation; another group of Fascist countries is described as unsatiable nations. One is fighting to preserve one's colony; the other is fighting to establish its own colonies. Fascism is the creation of war imperialism. War is inherent in the system. The war which is now going on is only an extension of the earlier one.

On 12 August 1939, speaking at Wardha, Narendra Deva said: "We are opposed to India's involvement in the war, and we have been renewing our commitments right from 1927." He felt that "we are left with no alternative but to launch our struggle for freedom. It is our duty to break the chain of

²⁰ *Sangharsh*, 21 February 1938.

slavery.”²¹ He was against any compromise with British imperialism. He took M.N. Roy to task for his support for the war. Roy was opposed to the resignation of the Congress Ministries in the Provinces. On 26 August 1940 he criticised Roy in his editorial entitled “Support For the War” in *Sangharsh*.

The stand taken by the Communists in India during the freedom movement was even more deplorable. In the beginning they described the war as an “imperialist war.” Subsequently, however, after Russia was attacked, they called the same war a people’s war. “It was only till yesterday that they (*i.e.* the Communists) used to characterise the war as imperialist,” said Narendra Deva. “According to them, it is Russia’s entry into the war on the side of the Allies which has altered its character. They now say that it has become an anti-Fascist war, a people’s war.”

Commenting on the logic of the Communists, Narendra Deva wrote:

Every individual war has to be studied separately and with reference to the historic background in which it arises. The present war is an “outcome of capitalist imperialism” and “of the policy of conquest” pursued by both the groups of belligerent nations.... The principal combatants in this context are England and the USA on the one side and Germany, Italy, and Japan on the other. Yet they are imperialists. The first group fights for retaining its empire, while the other for enlarging its territories.

The Communists, he went on, had demonstrated their “hollowness at a crucial moment in history and have failed to serve the purpose for which the great Lenin had created it.” Why did the Communists take such a dismal stand? Perhaps Communist policy was subordinate to the national politics of Soviet Russia. This seemed to be the only valid explanation. If the Communist Party constituted the vanguard of revolution, why did it keep itself aloof from the struggle for the liberation of this country? Was it not against Lenin’s famous colonial theory? What was the rationale of the conduct of the Communists in supporting the war and not participating in the struggle for independence?

The Congress Socialists were thus left alone to take up the crusade against British imperialism and to secure liberation of the country. They found in Gandhi a kindred spirit. Gandhi and the Socialist leaders joined hands in giving shape to the philosophy of struggle as against constitutional methods to achieve the independence of the country and to evolve a new basis for social reconstruction.

In March 1940 Jayaprakash Narayan was arrested for making an anti-war speech at Jamshedpur. Many other Socialist leaders joined him in this anti-war campaign.

21. *Ibid.*, 3 June 1940.

The Congress Socialist Party set up a war council to organize a struggle for the independence of the country.

There is a good deal of confusion about Leftism in our country. No man becomes a Leftist by pasting that label on himself. What are then the criteria for describing a man as Leftist? Are the Communists Leftists? Narendra Deva suggested three criteria. According to him, a Leftist was one (i) who supported the cause of social revolution; (ii) who actively participated in the programme drawn up by the Socialist forces in the national movement; and (iii) who was in favour of struggle against imperialist forces. The Communists did not measure up to these requirements. They had neither a programme of struggle nor a philosophy of social revolution. Their plan was to bring about "revolution" through the corridors of power.

After the Congress accepted office in 1937, a significant change came about in the attitude of the Congress leaders. Even Nehru could not escape from its contamination. He was not inclined to take the risk of struggle for achieving independence. He first oscillated between constitutionalism and struggle. Subsequent events have proved that his talk of struggle was only an eye-wash. As the days passed, he went on drifting to the side of constitutionalism.

The resignation of the Congress Ministries was designed "to act as a cover or political strategy to force recognition of the Congress Party as India's sole spokesman." Indeed Nehru and some other Congress leaders seem to have drawn up a strategy to wrest power; for the British had refused to concede real power to the Congress at the Centre. Besides, the Right wing in Nehru's own United Provinces was yet to formulate a policy that would eliminate the influence of the Left wing there. Nehru said subsequently that the resignation of the Ministeries was, "in a way," an error. The Congress "detested the thought of leaving office for any considerable period" and was anxious to return to power "as soon as it can be made possible for it to do so." The process of bargaining for power had already started.

According to Nehru, the immediate cause of the war was "the growth and aggression of Fascism and Nazism in Europe." If so, how come, then, that the Congress Working Committee, at its meeting on 22 October 1939, described Britain's war against Germany as "an imperialist war waged with the object of tightening the hold on colonial countries?" Why did it go on reiterating its faith in a Constituent Assembly as the "only way to solve the communal problem?"

Nehru was Gandhi's acknowledged heir apparent in politics. Yet the two agreed neither in their approaches nor in their objectives. Nehru seemed to be interested in power. He had lost his faith in the philosophy and

technique of struggle for social change. Gandhi, Narendra Deva, and Jayaprakash Narayan on the one hand and Nehru on the other thus widely differed. In 1939 Jayaprakash Narayan was still a Marxist. He believed in armed insurrection. So did Narendra Deva. Yet their ultimate objective, like that of Gandhi, was to create a new India free from exploitation.

Both Narendra Deva and Jayaprakash Narayan took advantage of the situation that emerged in the wake of the outbreak of the war to consolidate Left unity and to intensify the anti-imperialist movement in the country. The situation was fast changing. In May 1940 the Germans made a sweep of many countries. The Scandinavian countries, Belgium, France, and Holland fell over like a lot of ninepins. Even Britain stood in peril.

Nehru was pleading for conditional support for the war effort. On 3 July 1940 the Congress Working Committee decided at a meeting in Delhi to give full cooperation to the British Government in the event of the latter issuing an "unequivocal declaration according complete independence to India." By way of giving effect to such a declaration, it should "take immediate steps to constitute a provisional national government at the Centre."

On 20 June 1940 the Congress Working Committee's official policy on non-violence also underwent a basic change. It affirmed that Gandhi's technique of non-violence had no relevance so far as matters of national defence was concerned.

On 27 July 1940 the All-India Congress Committee met at Pune to ratify the Congress Working Committee's resolution on the war. Gandhi opposed the resolution. The differences between Nehru and Gandhi over the question of non-violence came to the surface. Azad made no secret of his and his colleague's differences with Gandhi. He said that "the Congress itself would have to fill the gap and do the steering if Gandhi refused to lead the Congress."

That there was a cleavage between Gandhi and the Congress leaders first became obvious during the Munich crisis. The rift showed up again after the outbreak of the war, especially at Ramgarh and at Pune. Gandhi failed to persuade the Congress to accommodate his views on non-violence in its official policy.

The Pune resolution offering conditional co-operation to the British Government was passed by ninety-five votes. Those who abstained from the vote included Rajendra Prasad, J.B. Kripalani, P.C. Ghosh, and Shankarrao Deo. Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan resigned in protest against the acquiescence in violence. Rajagopalachari is said to have been the moving spirit behind the Pune offer. Jayaprakash Narayan, who was in prison, was anguished. He wrote to Nehru to convey his sense of betrayal.

He cried: "Rajaji had stabbed us in the back." He requested Nehru to lead the opposition in the All India Congress Committee and the country. Alas, he did not know that Nehru, too, held the same view as Rajaji in regard to resistance to the war effort.

Nehru expected the British Government to make some corresponding friendly gesture. He described the "August offer" of the Viceroy as dead as a doornail." Gandhi again took up the leadership of the Congress. On 13 October 1940 he announced "individual *satyagraha*" to protest against the denial of the right of freedom of speech to the people to preach against the war and against India's participation in the war. Vinoba was the first *satyagrahi*. Nehru followed suit. He was arrested and later released on 3 December 1941.

On 8 December 1941 Gandhi went to Bardoli. In mid December he issued a 25-page pamphlet embodying his constructive programme. He spelt out the objectives of the programme. He renewed his pledge to achieve independence through non-violence and truth. To him independence meant the independence of the nation without distinction of race, colour, and creed. He also defined his views on economic equality. Economic equality, according to him,

meant... abolishing the eternal conflict between capital and labour.

It means the levelling down of the few rich in whose hands is concentrated the bulk of the nation's wealth on the one hand, and a levelling up of the semi-starved and naked millions on the other. A non-violent system of government is clearly an impossibility so long as the wide gulf between the rich and the hungry millions persist.

The Congress Working Committee met at Bardoli on 30 December 1941 and decided to call off "individual *satyagraha*." The resolution calling off the *satyagraha* was, according to Gandhi, drafted by Nehru. Gandhi was once again pushed into the background. He described the Bardoli resolution of the Congress as having given a decent burial to "individual *satyagraha*."

The controversy of non-violence v. violence reflected a conflict between the two most important forces within the Congress, one led by Gandhi and the other by Nehru. Gandhi was busy evolving an integrated philosophy of non-violence incorporating both the civil disobedience programme and the constructive programme. According to him, the two programmes were complementary to each other rather than antagonistic.

Gandhi's non-violence was a means to achieve (1) independence and (2) social change. He felt that Congressmen regarded non-violence only as a means of passive resistance, as a "political weapon" with which to fight the British Government and oblige it to transfer power. He for one would not achieve *swaraj* at the cost of non-violence. He, therefore, wrote to the

Congress President, Abul Kalam Azad, that he was not prepared to lead any struggle in which non-violence was not indispensable. The Congress, he charged, had deviated from its earlier commitment. It as prepared to offer material help to Great Britain in the war effort as a price for independence.

On 5 January 1942 Gandhi said that "the bargain had not been actually made, but the terms were agreed upon." He was confident that independence could not be achieved by joining the war. "It would", he said, "undo the attainment of complete independence."

The question of non-violence brought the differences between Gandhi and Nehru to a head. The Congress leaders were opposed to direct action,. Gandhi criticized the growing parliamentary mentality among Congressmen. "The parliamentary programme" he added, "has no place in the Congress so long as the war lasts." Anyone joining the Government, he said, would have to identify himself with the war effort.

On 3 April 1942 Nehru and Azad met Cripps and gave him a copy of the resolution of the Congress Working Committee. This resolution, Cripps hoped, was drafted before he had offered to ask the Commander-in-Chief to meet them.

In a telegram to Prime Minister Winston S. Churchill on 5 April 1942, Cripps wrote that there were at least two different views. Some members under the leadership of Gandhi were opposed to the proposals though they were definitely in a minority. The rest of the members were in favour of fighting the Japanese and would participate in the war effort if they were allowed the opportunity to "make their participation effective."

Cripps also expected that "the non-violent group will probably retire from all participation in the Working Committee during the war and will leave the other leaders (Azad, Nehru, and Rajagopalachari) to carry on." He hoped that this group would go all out to organize Indian resistance to Japan and "fight with courage and determination" to galvanize the Indian "people to action."

Azad admitted that the Congress had deliberately avoided direct action against the Government of India after the fall of France early in 1940 although there was a strong demand for such action. He said that the Congress did not want to take advantage of a "critical international situation."

Was Nehru thinking in terms of forming a Government? In a private talk Nehru said that "if some power could be secured, the Congress would have afforded to lose Gandhi, but that was not forthcoming: there was no point in creating a split by quarrelling with Gandhi."

These facts make it clear that there were two basic trends in India's politics. First, Gandhi was determined to launch a mass movement for the independence of India even without the support of the Congress leaders.

Second, the group led by Nehru was in favour of keeping the door open for negotiations with the British Government. A.K. Azad, Bhulabhai Desai, Govind Ballabh Pant, and Asaf Ali belonged to this group. Those who were opposed to any compromise or participation in the war included Rajendra Prasad, J.B. Kripalani, Vallabhabhai Patel, Narendra Deva, and Achyut Patwardhan. The battle-lines were drawn between these two groups. Gandhi took the nation into his confidence about the struggle he had in mind. He made it known that the impending struggle would be "all-embracing in character, in its call to all classes of people." It would be his last effort. There would be no restriction: there would be no rule, for instance, making the use of *khaddar*, *charkha*, etc., compulsory. The aim was to demand complete independence.

Nehru and Azad were opposed to any offensive against the Government. They felt that mass action at such a time would be inconsistent with Gandhi's own policy of "non-embarrassment." They were convinced that any offensive on the part of the Congress would embarrass Britain "in her prosecution of the war." They were ready to take part in the war effort "if independence were guaranteed." Nehru held that any mass movement would be "an offensive."

Gandhi replied; "... in the beginning... I was for non-embarrassment... but the mass movement is not inconsistent with my original policy of non-embarrassment." On 14 June 1942 he wrote: "I see no difference between the Fascist or Nazi Powers and the Allies. All are the exploiters, all resort to ruthlessness to the extent required to compass their end." He also made it clear that "the people must not, on any account, depend on the Japanese to get rid of power. That were a remedy worse than the disease."

Gandhi took the decision to launch a civil disobedience movement soon after his meeting with Cripps. On his return from the interview, he observed a fast for three days. He looked agitated. He said: "Sir Stafford Cripps came to India as a tout and proposed things to Indians without caring for Indians as a nation. It is high time for Britishers to vacate India." He outlined a programme for his movement. The Congress people, he said, should prepare themselves to shoulder the Government of the localities that might be evacuated by British agents or where civil administration might fail. Indeed, he added, attempts should be made to set up parallel Governments everywhere and to organise the people to obey them.

Gandhi was a votary of truth. To him, truth was God and God was truth. To the hungry millions in India, however, bread was God. Gandhi fully realized the problem of poverty in the country. "The British," he said to G.P. Hutheesing, "give us nothing while they demand everything. I have got information that 1,50,000 recruits are recruited monthly, out of which 50,000 are selected. The post card has risen from six paise, but even if it

rises to a rupee, am I going to stop letters? Then why this clamour of help?"

In an article entitled "Oh, the Troops!" Gandhi made the following suggestions—namely (1) that India should become free of all financial obligations to Britain; (2) that the annual drain to Great Britain should stop automatically; (3) that all taxation should cease except that the replacing Government imposes or retains; and that (4) the deed weight of an all-powerful authority keeping under subjection the tallest in the land should be lifted at once. He felt concerned about the "mental slavery" and "moral degradation" of the Indian people. In the situation then obtaining he almost "despaired" of overthrowing the Government. The colonial system, he said, was responsible for such a situation.

On 17 July 1942 Mirabehn said to the Private Secretary to the Viceroy:

Another consideration that had weighed with Gandhi was a still more vital thing—the fact that the country had in his judgement sunk to such depths of moral weakness, and was so humiliated, that its population was in such a state of slavery that they were prepared to criticize the British government at every turn and at the same time to lick its boots, however, much they hated it. Better die than live in that degraded state.

Britain was fighting a war of its own at the cost of India and other colonies. The people suffered in order to keep British safe. Gandhi was unhappy with the "scorched earth policy" that the British forces followed during their retreat from the countries of Soth Asia, a policy which not only hurt the enemy but punished the native populations for no fault of theirs. Gandhi, therefore, made up his mind to start a civil disobedience movement.

Nehru was not prepared for even non-violent resistance. He argued that recourse to non-violence was neither pragmatic nor practicable. The people as a whole were not sufficiently trained to practise non-violence. He would adopt violence rather than submit to slavery. But then the question was: Was Nehru ever prepared for a violent struggle? Did he not confess that he was "in favour of capturing power through a provisional Government, there being no time to wait for a Constituent Assembly to meet the contingency of the country's defence"?

The Congress adopted a wholly "bargaining attitude, specifying its terms for whole-hearted support for the war effort."

Nehru hoped that America might put pressure on Britain to concede the demand for India's independence. Louis Johnson, President Franklin D. Roosevelt's personal representative in India, reported to the Government of India on 3 April 1942 that "Nehru was trying to hitch India's wagon to the American star and not to Britain." Gandhi, However, did not share Nehru's hope. Chiang Kai-shek was another source of hope for

Nehru. Nehru even accompanied Chiang to Shantiniketan during the latter's visit to India in February 1942. When Roosevelt received a message from Chiang Kai-shek, he wrote to him. Churchill, however, held that the Congress Party was opposed by over ninety million Muslims, forty million "untouchables," and by the Indian States accounting for another ninety million people. Roosevelt, however, advised Churchill to "think of some arrangement by which India found its place in the European and American, that is, Western orbit rather than the Asiatic.... the mass of the Indian were really the cousins of us Westerners."

Nevertheless Gandhi was firm in his decision to launch a non-violent struggle for independence. At the same time he sought to carry the whole Congress with him. Nehru was opposed to Gandhi and went even to the extent of advocating violence resistance to the Japanese. He had suddenly developed a "fancy for guerrilla warfare" against the Japanese. A resolution passed at this time by the Allahabad Congress reflected the basic difference between the two leaders. Gandhi sent to the All India Congress Committee through Mirabehn a draft resolution on the question of war. This draft resolution laid down in clear language: (1) that after the failure of the Cripps Mission the British had no right to remain in India and that they should, therefore, quit; (2) that the Congress should proclaim the freedom of India and its non-belligerency and consequent friendship with all foreign powers, and (3) that if any foreign Power invaded India, the invasion should be resisted through non-violent, not violent methods. Gandhi also strongly denounced the arrival in India of the American expeditionary forces. The object of these forces was, according to him, to safeguard the vested interests of both the United Kingdom and the United States and to prop up British imperialism.

Nehru submitted a draft of his own for the consideration of the Congress Working Committee. He wanted to keep the door open for negotiations with the British Government. His resolution was defeated by 7 votes to 4 in the Working Committee. Thereafter, the majority placed Gandhi's resolution for consideration. At this stage Azad, who was presiding over the meeting, threatened to resign, for he apprehended that Gandhi's resolution would be adopted. Nehru felt that it was in India's interest to gain the sympathy of nations like America, China, and Russia. "All the nations", he held, "were so interwoven and interrelated in the war that any offensive of propaganda against Britain will amount to action against all the United Nations."

The other members of the Congress Working Committee, however, were stoutly opposed to any compromise or participation in any form. The Working Committee ultimately adopted the resolution drafted by Nehru. But it did not include most of the points that Gandhi wanted. ❧

Though Nehru and his group accepted Gandhi's idea of a civil disobedience campaign as settled at the Congress Working Committee meeting at Sevagram on 7 July 1942, they were only playing for time and did not really wish to start a mass movement immediately. The British defeat in Libya, followed by the German advance in Russia and Alexandria in North Africa, finally persuaded Nehru to consider Gandhi's idea of a mass movement. Even then he found the idea of a mass movement hard to swallow. Indeed he refused to go to Wardha when Gandhi summoned the Congress leaders. On the other hand he stressed the need to "gain more time." He also tried to put off decision by referring the matter of the All India Congress Committee. Gandhi informed the meeting at Wardha that he was contemplating to write to the Viceroy and to the United Nations before he started the movement.

The Communists were all for a mass movement in the beginning of the war. When the Soviet Union joined the war on the side of the Allies, they reversed their attitude. Leaders like K.M. Ashraf, Sajjad Zaheer, Sardesai, and Bal Krishna Sharma opposed the idea of a mass movement at the All India Congress Committee session held at Allahabad. In a letter to P.C. Joshi, Gandhi wrote:

I suggest that the title "people's war" is highly misleading. It enables the Government of India to claim that at best our popular party considers this as the people's war. I suggest that Russia's limited alliance with the allied powers cannot by any stretch of imagination change what was before an imperialist war.... Between Scylla and Charybdis, if I said in either direction, I suffer shipwreck. Therefore, I have to be in the midst of the storm.

When Gandhi took the decision to launch a mass movement for India's independence, the critics argued that his non-violence would only help Britain's enemies. He replied that it was for him a moral question, a challenge to his concept of non-violence. In his view, to argue that the plea for non-violence was tactical was not fair. "I am a non-violent person," he said,

and I say by all means struggle for freedom but then stop. My self-esteem will not allow me to help in strangling my strangler. No. I cannot help the Japanese. Having earned my freedom. I remain neutral. The ethics of the violent... are different. Indeed, Russia, erstwhile hater of Britain, can take the aid, and Britain, similar hater, gave it to her because both are violence favouring minds.

The Congress leaders were all caught up in the game of power politics. The issue of independence, as spelt out in the Lahore and Karachi sessions of the Congress in 1927 and 1930, receded into background. The old guard behaved as though it had some sinister design to accomplish. One wonders

if either the Socialist leaders or Gandhi ever realized the game of power politics. Why had thirteen members of the Congress Working Committee refused to remain the Working Committee under the presidentship of Subhash Chandra Bose? Why had Nehru joined with them against Bose? Why had he said that the question of "Left and "Right" in relation to the election of the Congress President was irrelevant? Nehru's stand here proved a severe blow to the efforts being made by the Socialists to bring unity in the Congress. The Socialist leaders were convinced that unity was necessary in the struggle of freedom. At the same time they saw the importance of Gandhi's leadership. This was perhaps why they adopted the policy of neutrality at the Tripuri session of the Congress.

Bose's attitude equally appeared to be unreasonable. He went on attacking the present leadership of the Congress, accusing it of reluctance to launch a struggle for freedom and of consciously working for compromise. He also held the view that "the greater obstacle is the present leadership of the Congress and not British Imperialism."²² He also appeared to vacillate in his views. When he was President of the Congress, he had pleaded for "negotiations with the British Government over the issue of war."²³ On 9 September 1939 he wrote an article in *The Forward Block* entitled "Lead from Wardha," which stated: "Let not our leaders who are now deliberating at Wardha ask for a whit less than what is our inherent birthright. If they are called on to negotiate, let them do so honourably."

However, the whole drama was a sordid affair at a crucial period when the whole nation was engaged in a grim battle for India's freedom. What intrigued the Socialist leaders was Nehru's taking such a stand; for in a letter to the members of the All India Council of the Independence For India League on 31 January 1929, he had stated: "The League came into existence primarily for the ideal of independence but it was clearly felt at the time and repeatedly stated that mere political independence is not enough. In our objectives, therefore, we deliberately included the reconstruction of Indian society on the basis of social and economic equality."²⁴ While moving an amendment to Gandhi's resolution at the Subject Committee meeting of the Congress at Calcutta on 27 December 1928, he had declared: "This Congress adheres... (to its view that) complete independence... (is) the goal of the Indian people and... there can be no true freedom till the British connection is served."²⁵ He had also said that the world was divided between "imperialistic and non-imperialistic group."²⁶

²² *Socialism and the National Revolution*, n.6, p. 127.

²³ *Ibid.*, p. 132.

²⁴ *Selected Works of Jawaharlal Nehru*, vol. III, p. 282.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 270.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 274.

He had developed almost a hatred for the words "Dominion status."

As early as 8 May 1929 Nehru had written to Srinivasa Iyenger: "Personally I am myself in total disagreement with the plea for acceptance of office as ministers or even for supporting others to retain this office. Whatever arguments there may be in favour of this I cannot reconcile it either with independence or with anything that has a remote resemblance to revolution of any kind."²⁷ He had then left no doubt in the mind of the people that he would continue his crusade till "the reasons for which the struggle was launched and the declaration of independence made are fulfilled". "In reality," he had categorically declared, "the fight for independence is a question of subsistence."

Now that the prospect of power had emerged before him he said good-bye to all that. His changed attitude to the war, to the struggle of freedom, and even to non-violent resistance seemed so strange and so out of character to all impartial observers. But then it did provide a clue to an understanding of his personality. He was a typical Indian.

It was 16 June 1941. Narendra Deva was in Lucknow at the residence of Bishan Narayan Seth to recoup his health after an illness. A couple of police officers came to arrest him and took him to the Agra Central Jail. His condition then suddenly took a turn for the worse, and he was bed-ridden for about a month and half. The panel of doctors, appointed to examine him, found that he was suffering from bronchitis. On 22 September 1941 he was released.

One knew that Narendra Deva was not keeping good health. He had constant attacks of asthma. That, however, had never deterred him from participating in the struggle. After Cripps went back, Gandhi decided to launch direct action. Narendra Deva was restless. He had hoped to be very much a part of the last fight for independence. Gandhi wrote to him to wait until the situation was ripe for direct action. He had chosen his own men at different places to organize the struggle. Narendra Deva was placed in charge of the United Provinces; R.M. Lohia in Orissa, and Mirabehn in Bengal. Why did Gandhi select Narendra Deva from among the galaxy of eminent national leaders belonging to the United Provinces? Obviously, he knew that his other old colleagues were not in favour of the struggle.

Jayaprakash Narayan was then in Deoli Concentration Jail. On learning of Narendra Deva's illness, he wrote to Nehru requesting him to make some arrangement for his treatment. Narendra Deva, however, preferred to suffer rather than to bother others. He first went to Nagar, where his health registered some improvement.

On 28 February 1942 he went to Bijapur. Here he received treatment at

²⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 290.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 313.

the hands of Dr Karode. When he was well enough, he went to Yaravada, where he had conversations with Achyut Patwardhan. Finally he went to Wardha.

Wardha had by now carved out a place for itself in history. Gandhi had his *Ashram* in Sevagram, near Wardha. Sevagram, which was a small cluster of houses made of mud and thatch, began to pulsate with life. Gandhi had started preparing for the struggle.

Gandhi himself looked after Narendra Deva. Soon there arrived Yusuf Meherally, Ramanandan Mishra, and Lohia. Wardha thus became a centre for the Socialist leaders. Under the leadership of Gandhi they set about the task of preparing a blueprint for their historic struggle.

Narendra Deva and Nehru were released on 15 June 1945. The war situation had largely eased by this time. Hostilities had ended in Europe, but the war against Japan was still on. Asia was the principal theatre of war; and India was the principal base of Allied operations in East Asia.

Wavell, a soldier, had assumed charge as Viceroy of India. He knew the "temper of the country" and was anxious to find "a way out of the political impasse." He, therefore, invited leaders of the various political parties to a conference at Simla, the summer capital of India, to discuss the question of constitutional changes in India. Naturally, the attention of the entire country was drawn to Simla. The Congress leaders got busy with the negotiations for transfer of power. They had decided ultimately to get power through negotiation and compromise.

But the Socialist leaders still hoped that the Congress would continue the struggle for the independence of the country. They were against the withdrawal of the resolution the Congress had adopted on 8 August 1942. This resolution had explicitly called for "the immediate withdrawal of British power from India and the establishment of a united federal state in India in which power must essentially belong to the workers in the fields and factories."²⁹ Had the Congress leaders stuck to this August resolution, another struggle of independence was inescapable and inevitable. But the Congress leaders were now quite willing to go back on their commitment. The Socialist leaders, however, preferred to build up the revolutionary power of the masses. In an interview to the Associated Press of India on 19 January 1947, Narendra Deva said: "If you want to achieve independence of India as per the resolution passed by the AICC (All India Congress Committee) on August 8, 1942, India has to face another struggle."

Two main factors weighed with Narendra Deva in favour of the path of struggle. First, Great Britain had shifted the burden of the war on the

²⁹ *National Herald* (Lucknow), 15 January 1947

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 20 January 1947.

people of India, and as a result India's economy had almost collapsed. Secondly, the dollar imperialism of the United States had become more the first order. It had no choice in the matter. It now depended on the support of the United States. Narendra Deva found a new Anglo-Saxon imperialism emerging in the world in the place of the monolithic control that England had exercised formerly over 25 colonies. England knew well that it could not keep its island safe from the latest weapons of war like "atom bombs and rockets." The alliance between England and the United States and the joint diplomacy of those two countries were looking for new spheres of influence either through establishing "semi-people's governments in the places which she (England) had kept under control or by transferring English industries to Africa,... building England's potential war bases alongside the Mediterranean and in Africa, and at the same time making frantic efforts to establish friendly ties with the Arab countries."

The Congress leaders were hesitant to wage another struggle. We may call this an irony of fate. They realized that they were old, and they were anxious to wrest power before they were replaced by the young Socialists, who were committed to establish a new social order through a programme of struggle. Fear gripped the old guard.

The Socialists thought that the situation was very ripe for a revolution. The army was restive. On 19 February 1946 the Royal Indian Navy rose in revolt in Bombay. Soon the revolt spread to Calcutta and Karachi. The peasants and the workers were also restless. There was a spate of strikes all over the country. What was needed was a revolutionary leadership. Yet Nehru and other Congress leaders preferred to strike a deal through negotiation. They thus sealed the fate of the country. The formation of the interim Government, the convening of the Constituent Assembly, and ultimately the partition of the country were acts of surrender which followed in quick succession. The Congress leaders had no belief in people's power. Gandhi was prepared to give one more fight to the British Government, but he saw that he had lost his hold over his followers. These latter were incapable of taking any bold step to wrest power.

The long journey towards independence thus came to a painful end. Independence meant a truncated India, a mass exodus of people, and bloodshed. The imperialist conspiracy to keep India weak thus succeeded. The Congress leaders formed the Government, but by accepting partition of the country on the basis of the hated two-nation theory; in doing so they had clearly gone back on all their cherished principles and the August Resolution.

Inaugurating the Socialist Club at Lucknow in July 1947, Narendra Deva said: "The country has not become fully independent, and if the

Congress wants to flourish in the future, it must change its policy.” “If it did not do so,” he added, “it would remain only an election-fighting machine and jobbery and corruption in its ranks would increase.” He warned that even “a strong constitution would not be able to check corruption.”³¹ He was convinced that the leadership of the Congress continued “to be reactionary as before, and unless it is altered no one can believe that the new programme will be put into action or honest efforts will be made to achieve the new objectives.”

Factors such as (1) the class composition of the Congress Party, (2) lack of a revolutionary leadership, (3) the failure to establish a tradition of struggle, (4) the adoption of a policy of constitutionalism and compromise, and (5) the conspicuous absence of a coherent and scientific social philosophy of national reconstruction were bound to recoil on the organization. Nor could the Congress “become an instrument for building up a Socialist state.” It would remain only “an election-fighting machine.” This proved to be true. To make its victory sure in the elections, the Congress allowed a new class of vested interests to join its fold. These interests included (1) the aristocracy, (2) a set of semi-officials belonging to the class of *Sarpanch* in the villages, and (3) conservative and communal forces.

How then could the Congress give a new lead to the country? Narendra Deva felt that “it is not enough that we have achieved freedom. We have to gain full benefits of our freedom on a revolutionary basis. The revolution is to be the main pivot of our social structure.” He had always advocated a peaceful revolution. He once wrote: “I recollect having had conversation with Gandhiji, the Father of the Nation. He told me that the weapon of *satyagraha* was to be used not only against foreign domination, but it would also be legitimately used against one’s own Government if there was a clear case for its use.”

For Narendra Deva, revolution was the kingpin of social change. “The people,” he said, “must establish their own power of resistance to replace the Government if it does not carry out its own policy and programme.” He was convinced that there was no escape from class struggle in India. He, however, made an attempt to combine it with the technique of *satyagraha*. He thought that the two together would prove an effective instrument in the hands of the downtrodden to bring about social transformation in the country. He therefore said: “We should accept the technique of non-violence. But it does not mean that we should shun the theory of class struggle. As a matter of fact, it provides the core of the party. Gandhi made a unique contribution by discovering the technique of non-violence. Nor can we separate him from the history of the last 31 Years of India.”³²

³¹ Ibid., 25 July 1947.

³² *Sangharsh*, 31 July 1950.

As Chairman of the Reception Committee of the Fifth Annual Conference held from 24 February to 2 March 1947, Narendra Deva once again stressed the need to broaden the social basis of political parties and to change the old property relations.

The caste system has been the bane of India. The ruling parties and the parties in the opposition have equally exploited it to gain political advantage. Today it is more a political than a social problem. The exploitation of caste and communal bitteresses is the basis of the political system today in India. Narendra Deva realized the gravity of the problem. He welcomed at the beginning "the alignment of the downtrodden on the basis of these castes," saying that it was "a happy and an inevitable feature of elections." In his view "it reflected that the lower castes, consisting of landless agricultural labour and the small peasantry, were rising against the vested interests, the economically superior higher castes." But it could not be a permanent solution. He struck a word of caution. He saw that ultimately caste alignments might lead to disaster. He was afraid lest the exploited castes should allow themselves to be used as pawns in the hands of the exploiters and the "social climbers."

Recently experience bears out the validity of Narendra Deva's fears on this score. In every lower caste there has emerged a class of *nouveau riche*. Members of this class use the others for their political purposes. Narendra Deva made a timely suggestion. He wrote:

The growth of conscious casteism must be arrested now, since it has exhausted its utility. It is now necessary to tell the lower castes that their real enemies are the vested interests and that the upper castes had held them under their yoke only on account of their economic superiority. The oppressed castes must be told that the remedy of all their ills lies in joining hands with the other economically oppressed people, may be of any caste or creed, to fight the vested interests even among the lower castes.³³

This contention is valid if recent events in the country are any indication. Reservation in the services or representation in elective institutions cannot be a permanent solution. It does not pave the way for a revolution. The different castes build their own barriers based on sectarian interests for the political exploitation of the general mass by the *elite*. Caste conflicts must be changed into class conflicts if a social revolution is to succeed in the country. Lohia's famous theory of "60 v. 40" may appear revolutionary, but it only arrests the process of revolution in the country. What happened when the Janata Party raked this question? Poverty and backwardness are national problems; it can be solved only at the national level and through a national revolution based on class struggle rather than caste conflicts.

³³ *National Herald*, 30 May 1948.

How could Nehru and Patel particularly, who had developed a vested interest in the existing system, tolerate the Socialists in the Congress fold? The decks were eventually cleared at Nasik, a historic city in Maharashtra, the city which had witnessed the emergence of the Congress Socialist Party. Appropriately the Congress Socialist Party separated from the Congress in that same city.

Power which has its own logic is bound to make its impact. Nehru was no exception when he assumed power; for he said: "It is counter-revolutionary to put the accent on socialism at this moment." When he formed his Government, the class character of the men he chose to head the Ministries exposed his commitment to Socialism.

The story, however, does not end here. Early in 1948, after parting company with the Congress, the Socialists decided to contest the District Board elections in the United Provinces. They felt that the people had developed a certain smugness since the attainment of independence and that this was fraught with danger. If the nation was to advance, it should be kept alive and working, and every individual should be made to feel "the thrill of freedom" and "his responsibility towards the State."³⁴ The local bodies were institutions which really affected the villages where the bulk of the people of India lived. The Socialists held the view that the success of democracy in India would depend on how honest and successful the working of these institutions was.

How could the Congress leaders allow the Socialists to capture these institutions? They read into the motives of the Socialists. They adopted all manner of tactics to win the elections and to defeat the Socialists. Congressmen issued leaflets making undignified and false statements against them. Muslim voters were told in threatening language that if they wanted to demonstrate their loyalty to the State, they should solidly vote for the Congress. They even went to the extent of creating confusion by identifying the State with the party and the party with the nation.

At the time when the Socialist Party broke away from the Congress Party, Narendra Deva found himself confronted with a moral question—namely whether or not he should continue to be a member of the State Assembly as a Congress candidate. After deep thought, on 31 March 1948, he resigned from the State Assembly along with twelve other Socialists.

The Socialist leaders were thus true to their ideal of building up a new society based on democracy and social justice. In contrast, the Congress leaders appeared power-hungry. Whenever there was a mass movement, they raised the bogey of "communalism" in the country. They, however, did not realize that the crises that arose from time to time were due more to their failure to bring about social change in the country than to any attempt by the Socialists to mobilize peasants and the working class.

³⁴ *Ibid*, 3 April 1948.

Narendra Deva declared in a statement that “healthy opposition is essential for the success of democracy.”³⁵ In a parliamentary democracy the opposition parties were as important as the ruling party. Narendra Deva had one important reservation. “Unfortunately,” he said, “there is no tradition of democracy in our country. Communalism is in the ascendant at the moment. Democracy is also a matter of habit, and we are not used to democratic institution and practices. For these reasons, in the absence of constructive opposition, it becomes easy to develop a mentality of authoritarianism.”³⁶ How prophetic his statement has proved to be. There has been a systematic and deliberate attempt by the ruling party to suppress opposition in the country. It is again a long and yet painful story. The ruling party managed to win the elections for their leaders again and again by purchasing votes, by capturing polling booths, by breaking ballot boxes, and so on and so forth. Today the role of money is another decisive factor in winning the elections.

Narendra Deva, if he had so desired, could have crossed the floor without tendering his resignation. He said: “We could have followed such a practice, but we did not think it proper to do so for deeper reasons.” So anxious was he to maintain the moral basis of politics. However, this moral basis was eroded in the years that followed as a consequence of the ruling party encouraging defections from the opposition through allurements of power and money.

After resigning from the Congress, Narendra Deva decided to seek re-election as a candidate of his own party. What the Congress did in its attempt to defeat him is another nail hammered into the coffin of democracy.

Narendra Deva offered himself as a candidate in a bye-election from Faizabad. This was his own constituency. The Congress Party set up Baba Raghava Das, a *sannyasi*, against him and used the appeal of religion to defeat him. Faizabad is a small city in the United Provinces. Formerly it was known as Ayodhya, the birthplace of Rama. It is a city of temples, and thousands of *sadhus* live there after renouncing wordly life. How could they allow an atheist to win the election? The Congress left no stone unturned to exploit the sentiment against atheism. An Indian may be modern in appearance, but at heart he is an obscurantist still. His endeavour to combine obscurantism with modernization breeds hypocrisy. In India, politics draws its sustenance from such hypocritical postures. Narendra Deva was naturally hurt by this kind of unprincipled politics. He “realized,” as Achyut Patwardhan wrote, that “Jawaharlal Nehru as well

35 *Ibid.*

36 *Ibid.*

37 *Ibid.*

as the other Congress leaders valued political power more than their ideas.”³⁸ Similarly the Premier of the State, Govind Ballabh Pant, bracketted the Socialists with the Communists and branded them “totalitarians.” He cautioned the people that if the Socialists came into power, there would be “no freedom of thought or individual liberty.”³⁹ Such an allegation against a Socialist, and particularly against Narendra Deva, pointed to a serious trend in the ruling party. Only until recently, Narendra Deva was a patriot, one who had fought for the independence of India. How could he become an enemy of the nation after Nehru assumed power? But power politics makes no distinction between friend and foe. The seeds of totalitarianism were sown the same day that the Congress decided not to allow opposition parties to grow in this country by capturing booths, by fanning communal tensions, and by enacting ordinances convenient to them. It was the game of power politics.

In July 1950 a number of peasants went to see Nehru in Banaras and represent their grievances to him. They were granted an interview and were called in one by one. Each one, as he came in, placed before him a copy of his representation. Nehru, not having patience enough to read it through, tore them all up. This act went on for some time. They ultimately put all the representations together in a bundle and handed it over to him. He could not tear it into pieces. This sent him into a temper, and he shouted: “You impertinent people, your party is a pack of useless people. I can put you all behind the prison bars.”⁴⁰ It is a small event, but significant enough to show that power had gone to his head.

Narendra Deva hoped that at least his party might set an example, but power politics, like an infectious disease, had effected even his colleagues. The party developed a crack. The defeat of the party at the polls in 1952 widened the crack.

An unfortunate incident had taken place in Bihar. The state unit of the Socialist Party was holding its annual conference at Patna. The venue was historic Anjuman Hall; the atmosphere there was surcharged with tension and excitement. One speaker after another came and began to condemn JP for his leadership. Was it a part of the game of power-politics? For the first two days JP alone was in the focus. He listened to his critics with patience. But on the concluding day, JP suddenly got up and said in brief: “I do not take pride in being a Marxist or a revolutionary. But I do take pride in my own integrity of character and I feel upset when my colleagues with whom I have worked and suffered in the struggle impute motives to me. I am left with no option but to quit the party.” His voice was choked with emotion and he could not speak any more. He immediately left the hall. A few

38 *Ibid*, p.145.

39 *National Herald*, 6 April 1948.

40 *Sangharsh*, 31 July 1950.

hours before his speech the convention hall was bubbling with life. But the moment Jayaprakash left, silence prevailed there: it was the silence of the graveyard.

Soon after this conference, Chandra Shekhar was travelling with him from Buxar to Delhi. When he asked him about the incident in Patna, JP said regretfully: "Why some of my party colleagues suspect my intention. For years we have worked together and known one another as comrades-in-arms in the cause of socialism." Perhaps JP is too sensitive to be a politician.

In May 1952, a special convention was held at Panchmarhi, a hill station in Madhya Pradesh. Narendra Deva, who was Chairman of the Party, was away in China. He could not preside over the convention. In his absence Jayaprakash Narayan proposed Lohia to the chair.

This convention proved a turning-point in the history of the Socialist movement. Lohia made a significant contribution to the deliberations of the conference. For the first time the differences that had been dormant among the leaders came to the surface. Jayaprakash Narayan was singled out for the party's defeat in the elections. Jayaprakash Narayan bravely took upon himself the entire blame for the defeat. He said, however, that he had noticed during the debate "a feeling among the party ranks that our policies were responsible for our electoral defeat."⁴¹

Jayaprakash Narayan was also accused of deviating from the "revolutionary path" and "nation-wide struggle." He took this too in his stride. At the same time he sounded a word of caution: "Let us not be under any illusion that we will achieve some revolutionary change in two or three years. A true revolutionary should be capable of patience and should work diligently and regularly even when the fruit is nowhere in sight."⁴²

In his presidential speech, Lohia spelt out his famous thesis, known as "New Doctrines." Jayaprakash Narayan welcomed Lohia's "New Doctrines," and said:

I have always believed myself to be a Marxist, and I approach Lohia's address as a Marxist. Frankly, even then I have no difficulty in accepting what he has said. A Marxist, however, is never afraid of saying that for such and such a problem Marx offers no solution and therefore let us find out an appropriate solution after a careful analysis and study of the objective conditions. I believe that in that is what Lohia has done.⁴³

The fact is that this was the beginning of schism that eventually tore the Socialist movement apart. The reason was not, and it could not be

41 *Report of the Special Convention of the Praja Socialist Party*, P 24.

42 *Ibid* p 26

43. *Ibid* p. 31.

ideological. JP was almost a father figure in the Socialist movement at this time. It might have an eye sore to many of his critics in the party.

14 June 1953. The whole crisis, which lay simmering for months, exploded at last at Betul. When Jayaprakash ended his fast at Pune, Nehru invited him to meet him in Delhi in March, 1953. He wanted to discuss and evolve the basis of co-operation between the Congress and the Praja Socialist Party. He also invited Narendra Deva and J.B. Kripalani. The talks broke off when Jayaprakash submitted to Nehru a 14-point programme for ushering in Socialism. Jayaprakash's detractors accused him of being anxious to join the Government. If it was so, why did he write a letter to the National Executive long before the elections expressing his desire to be spared from parliamentary activities? On August 28, 1951 he wrote that "one decisive item of difference is our view that state power and initiative are not the only means of building up a democratic socialist society, but that popular initiative and day-to-day efforts are also essential. Indeed, the latter are ultimately more important. I fervently hope that the executive would leave me out, because I have no aptitude for parliamentary work and I do earnestly wish to be allowed to do field work."⁴⁴ It seemed that he had already begun to abhor power politics. He was in search of a new basis for mobilizing the people for revolutionary changes. It was evident by now that some of these leaders were in hurry to capture power.

Asoka Mehta presented a dissertation entitled "Compulsions of Backward Economy and Responsive Co-operation" at the conference. This added fuel to the fire. After the elections to the Bombay Corporation in 1948, Mehta had emerged as an ardent champion of the separation of the party from the Congress. Now he was all for what he called "responsive co-operation." Jayaprakash was shocked. Even then he decided to report to the convention about the talks he had with Nehru. Nobody could understand what was the relevance of Asoka Mehta's theory of "responsive co-operation" on that occasion. Is it that he found that power was dangling before him?

Jayaprakash declared that "the co-operation suggested by Nehru was not worth trying and would not succeed if colleagues like Narendra Devaji and Lohia were against it."

Narendra Deva was also not in favour of supporting the Government. "But," he said, "I am of the view that we should give our co-operation on the merits of the programmes acceptable to us. To me the issue of co-operation is not the question of an ideology. But it will be suicidal for the party to support the Government."⁴⁵ According to him, any support for

⁴⁴ *Towards Total Revolution*, Part 11, pp. 153-154.

⁴⁵ *Sangharsh*, 15 August 1953.

the Government was “an attempt to commit suicide.”

Narendra Deva was not as rigid as Lohia. The stand taken by Lohia and his group was strange. If they were right, how did they justify Gandhi's frequent visits to the Viceroy during the freedom movement? Was not reconciliation a part of non-violence?

Summer had set in. It was the month of June. It was already warm outside, but it had its impact inside as well. The temperature rose high. “As I sat back and listened to the speeches,” Jayaprakash said, “I realised that the entire criticism was directed against me.”⁴⁶ He announced his resignation from the National Executive, for “he honestly believed that under the present circumstances he should step aside.”⁴⁷ He ultimately preferred to go into wilderness than to remain in power politics.

Narendra Deva had a different view. He did not agree with Jayaprakash. He had always laid emphasis on building up a strong political party in order to wage the struggle of socialism in this country. He was even against the merger of the party with the KMPP. In 1952 he was away from India to China on an official delegation. Even ritual of the merger was completed before he returned. When he came back, he got reconciled to the *fait accompli*. He was the Chairman of the Party. Yet he never grudged. He signed the merger document.

Being an important and historical place in U.P., Allahabad was the venue of the foundation conference of the Praja Socialist Party. The city is important because it is situated on the confluence of three rivers—Ganga, Yamuna and Saraswati. The combination of these three rivers is known as *Triveni*. Speaking on this occasion, Narendra Deva said: “It is enough that our party has now become a *Triveni*, a combination of the three parties: KMPP, Forward Bloc and Socialist Party. But let us prevent it from becoming an ocean. If this happens it will lose its character.”

The young Chandra Shekhar also rallied behind the stand of Narendra Deva. He had opposed the merger at the conference. Lohia at first took him as a communist. He might have realised his mistake after Chandra Shekhar's article which he wrote in reply to communists was shown to him. Both Lohia and Asoka Mehta were the moving spirits behind the merger. “Perhaps what Lohia had in mind,” said Y.B.R. Murthy, “was that through this merger he might undermine the importance of JP in the party.”

J.B. Kripalani replaced Narendra Deva. He became the Chairman of the party and Ram Manohar Lohia its General Secretary. But this partnership could not last long. In March 1954, a mid-term election was held in Kerala. The PSP gained 19 seats and was the third largest party in

⁴⁶ Report of the Special Convention of the Praja Socialist Party, 1953.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, p.73.

the State Assembly. Neither the CPI nor the Congress was able to form the Government. Eventually a minority government led by Pattom Thanu Pillai was installed with the support of the Congress Party. As far as the formation of the ministry was concerned it had the support of all the leaders including JP, Kripalani and Lohia. The situation however began to deteriorate after the police resorted to firing there. Lohia took objection to it. He was at the time imprisoned in UP. He was arrested in connection with a movement against enhancement of canal rates. He sent a cable directing the Chief Minister of Kerala to resign. When Pattom Thanu's Government failed to do so, Lohia resigned from the party General Secretaryship and also from membership of the national executive.

A serious controversy ensued at that time. It appears that the rival groups were out for confrontation. Delhi was fixed as the venue for the meeting of the National Executive. Lohia was released then from prison. Much against his desire he attended the meeting. He pressed for simultaneous resignation of the Thanu Pillai Ministry and appointment of an inquiry commission. Though the other group was in favour of setting up a judicial inquiry, it wanted to discuss the question of the Ministry's resignation only after the judicial inquiry submitted its report. Lohia stuck to his guns. The scene shifted from Delhi to Nagpur. It was November, 1954, A special convention was held there. Lohia renewed his demand. But it was turned down by 303 votes to 217. The Executive, however, decided to step aside and make room for a new Executive.

Narendra Deva had recently come from Europe. He went to attend the special convention of the party. But he could not participate in it, on account of his illness. The situation had taken a serious turn. The choice ultimately went in favour of Narendra Deva. He was almost forced to accept the Party's Chairmanship.

Nevertheless, Lohia and his group declined to serve on the National Executive. The tragic happenings in the party had now reached their climax. Narendra Deva scrupulously avoided taking sides on the controversy. But the Avadi Congress, on January 21, 1955 sprung a surprise by accepting the objective of a 'socialist society'. The Socialists were divided. There was polarisation of forces into two camps: One, supporting Asoka Mehta's thesis 'responsive co-operation' and the other Lohia's doctrine of 'squi-distance' were poised against each other. The Avadi resolution of the Congress added fuel to the fire. Nehru proved himself again a shrewd politician. The Press carried different stories, under the captions "New group is formed in PSP," "PSP Congress merger," "Asoka Mehta to discuss Congress PSP merger with Nehru in Delhi." All this reflected the attitude of the group led by Asoka Mehta.

Narendra Deva was still as clear in his mind as ever. Commenting on the

Avadi resolution, Narendra Deva said: "The Congress will have to be overhauled completely and purged of all reactionary elements, and the bureaucracy will have to work with a new spirit in order that they might be able to achieve the new objective. I have grave doubts whether the Congress leaders will even succeed in transforming these institutions."⁴⁸ Assuming that Asoka Mehta and his group were waiting for an opportunity to jump on Nehru's bandwagon, but the statement by Narendra Deva should have dispelled the doubts. Lohia on the other hand was not prepared to budge from his position. Once he said: "I want absolute freedom of speech. To what extent? Some might ask. I say that it should be absolute. Some others may say: speak the truth but not the unpleasant truth. But I doubt if they themselves believe in it. There should be complete freedom of speech, freedom to write, freedom of propaganda and expression against the decisions taken by the party. But one should abide by the party decisions in action."⁴⁹ It reflects how his mind was working.

Narendra Deva was striving to build up a political party. To him an organised political party was a means to achieving power in order to harness it into socialist reconstruction. Having this in mind he was giving a new shape to the organisation. But there was a swift change in the situation. Narendra Deva was shocked to find that his party was disintegrating. He had a very short time at his disposal. The in-fighting in the party went on mounting. But none of them ever realised that as one swallow does not make a summer, so also no individual can make a revolution. What is important is the revolutionary situation. But still more important is how the revolutionary leadership takes advantage of it. For a revolution a well-knit party is a must. Non-Congressism cannot be the synonym for a revolution.

Power politics had cut across all political ideologies. Lohia's new doctrine at Betul was an excellent exposition of some of Gandhi's ideas. But it did not provide a new basis for social philosophy of revolution for social reconstruction. To capture power is not enough to bring social change. It has at least been proved by the recent events.

On August 9, 1955 Lohia addressed a letter to Socialists. He wrote: "Every effort must be made to dispel the impression that we are out to build just a party of militant opposition... but which shall equip itself continually to effect revolutionary changes in economy, politics and culture as soon as people put us into office."⁵⁰ But he hoped that his party "shall act as a militant opposition as long as it is out of office". By the term 'militant

48 *Facts Relating to Lohia's Attempt at Disrupting the PSP-Praja Socialist Publication*, 1955, p.7.

49 *Samajvadi Andolan-ka-itihās—R.M. Lohia—p.139.*

50 *Letters to Socialists—Dr. Rammanohar Lohia*, pp.2-3.

opposition' he meant that his party would offer resistance to injustice and it may include (1) constitutional agitation; (2) individual civil disobedience, and (3) mass civil disobedience. He at the same time made a distinction between 'constitutional agitation' and 'mass civil disobedience'. "Constitutional agitation", he wrote, "must be a continual practice, while mass civil disobedience can be only a very rare occurrence"⁵¹ He did not seem to be much enamoured of the method of 'mass civil disobedience'. But Narendra Deva was endeavouring to break a new path of social revolution in the light of his Marxian ideology in the context of this country. Lohia's new doctrine was devoid of the dynamics of social change, nor had it the motivation of a revolution. A line should be drawn between romanticism and revolution

For example, his plea for caste-reservation is an effort to perpetuate the caste system in the country and also to create vested interest against the revolution. Narendra Deva wanted to make a breakthrough in this vicious circle. How relevant is his emphasis today on transformation from caste to class content. Lohia, however, turned his fire against PSP leaders. He called them by different names, such as 'paralysed leadership of PSP', 'pseudo-socialists'. The gulf was bound to widen. Though bed-ridden, Narendra Deva was stranded between the devil and the deep sea. At one extreme there was Asoka Mehta's thesis of 'responsive co-operation', on the other was Lohia's 'theory of equi-distance'. But neither 'responsive co-operation' nor 'equi-distance' is the compulsion of a backward economy. What is needed is a new basis of social philosophy of revolution. Even the Communists, for that matter, are outdated. Narendra Deva was steering a new course. But, alas, he was racing against time.

Narendra Deva was sick. He was having regular attacks of asthma. But his spirit was indomitable. He took upon himself the responsibility of reorganizing the party and making it a suitable instrument of social change and socialism. He said: "Let the attack of asthma go together with my tour and I shall leave no stone unturned to reawaken the downtrodden and exploited masses." He expressed pain at the regular and consistent attacks on the leadership in the Press and in the public on the leadership of the party. It was a situation similar to the Tripuri Congress in 1939, where Subhas Bose went on attacking Gandhi for delaying the struggle for independence.

A prominent Socialist leader told him "Acharyaji, let us forget and forgive." Narendra Deva retorted: "I am Narendra Deva and not Mahadeva." If he was polite and humble, he was equally determined and firm. He was fighting against his illness and at the same he was waging a struggle for socialism. But before he could take up the larger interest of the

⁵¹ *Ibid.* p. 5

party, he was involved in an internecine war in the party. He was confronted with the challenge on three fronts--one was his own sickness; the other the fight for socialism to which he had dedicated his whole being; and the third, the intra-party conflict, which had been persisting for the last few years. "It looks," he said "as if certain persons are bent upon breaking party discipline."⁵²

Raj Narain seemed to have alleged that the then leadership of the party was trying to promote a particular type of ideology which was not conducive to the growth of Democratic Socialism and that it was further trying to damage and sabotage "the party from within." Naturally Narendra Deva was not happy over what was happening inside the party. He believed that the unity of the party together with discipline was essential if a new society was to be created. Unfortunately the bickerings kept mounting till the party split.

Narendra Deva took the challenge bravely. To the attack of Raj Narain, he replied, "This is a lie. I challenge any one in the country to cite a single instance wherein the National Executive after the Nagpur Convention has departed from the accepted policy statement adopted at Allahabad. Being a strict disciplinarian, I shall stick to that policy. I am not bound by what Dr. Lohia or Mr. Raj Narain says."⁵³

Narendra Deva was not an iconoclast. He believed in finding some positive solutions for the problems. A policy of anti-Congressism was not enough to bring a social revolution or to build a Socialist society. This has been proved at least after the Janata Party came to power.

Narendra Deva made every effort to find a way out to bring unity among the party leaders. He made one last effort to avoid the unpleasant duty of taking disciplinary action against some of the leaders. As he was left with no other alternative, he undertook a tour of the country despite his illness in order to spread the gospel of Socialism.

19 February 1956: The place was Erode in the Coimbatore district. Narendra Deva was convalescing there. Since the morning he had been restless. He was talking loudly about the party, about Jayaprakash, about Lohia. Sri Prakasa wrote, "Narendra Devaji went up and down and talked to me in relays but soon got fatigued. He was hoping to have a long talk with me in the afternoon. But at 5 p.m. a terrific paroxysm overtook him, and within ten minutes he was gone."

Narendra Deva is dead; so is Lohia. The two pioneers of Socialism are no longer alive. But where is the Socialist movement in India today? Alas, when the occasion came for the Socialist movement to shape the destiny of India, it was already dead. Whether it is the question of "equi-distance" or

⁵² *Janata*, 19 June 1955

⁵³ *Janata*, 19 June, 1955

of “responsive co-operation” both have lost their relevance today. How paradoxical it sounds that the police firing is still being resorted to for resolving the socio-economic problems in the country. According to a report there has been so many police firings under the Janata Government as never before. But none among the Janata leaders has ever protested against them, not even the followers of Lohia. What an irony, indeed!

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BRAHMA NAND.

**ARTICLES AND SPEECHES
BY
ACHARYA NARENDRA DEVA**

*My Recollections**

I was born at Sitapur on October 30, 1889. Though our ancestral house was at Faizabad, my father—Shri Baldev Prasad—was practising law at Sitapur. In our family the first to receive English education was my grandfather's younger brother. In Oudh, British rule was established only in 1856 and that was why English education in Oudh was introduced so late. My grandfather's name was Babu Sohan Lal. He was a professor in the old Canning College. He gave English education to my father and my eldest uncle. After passing Intermediate from the Canning College, my father took his degree in law. Due to eye trouble, however, he could not pass his BA. My grandfather read for him books on law and that was how he prepared for the examination. After passing law, my father started practice under the guidance of Munshi Murlidhar—a student of my grandfather. Both lived like real brothers. Both earned and spent jointly. Munshiji had no child. He loved his nephew and my elder brother like his sons. About two years after my birth, as my grandfather was no more, my father was forced to leave Sitapur. He started practising at Faizabad. It was at Sitapur that he developed a religious bent of mind. That was due to his contact with some sannyasis. He was a man of profound charitable habits and sober nature. He was deeply interested in *Vedanta* and was well up in its theory. He was generally in the company of *Sadhus*. Persian was commonly learnt when he got his education. Yet, to keep himself abreast of his own culture and religion, he studied Sanskrit. Though a renowned pleader, he had many other hobbies. He had written many text-books for children in English, Hindi and Persian. He had also published a few selections. He wrote the English primer for teaching my eldest brother. I started my first lessons with those books. He was also interested in building houses and in gardening. We had a small library in our house. When I grew up, I looked after the garden and the library during the vacation. I have said that my father was a religious man and, therefore, the preachers of *Sanatan Dharma*, *sadhus* and the learned visited our home frequently.

*Acharya Narendra Deva wrote his collections in Hindi and in English version was published in the book *A commemoration volume* edited by B V. Keskar and V K.N. Menon.

Besides, my father also took interest in Congress and social conference work. My first Guru was Pandit Kali Din Avasthi. He used to teach us Hindi, mathematics and geography. My father loved me most. He himself taught me for half an hour every day. Very frequently I accompanied him to the court. There, my father's colleagues taught me English. Many a time I accompanied him on his tours. I remember, he had once taken me to Delhi where the annual session of the *Bharat Dharma Mahamandal* was held. I had the opportunity to hear the speech of Pandit Din Dayal Sharma. Though I did not have the ability to know its worth at that time, I remember only this much that Sharmajee was a renowned figure in those days.

I read at home the *Ramayana* composed by Tulsidas and the Hindi translation of the *Mahabharata*. I also read *Baital Pachchisi*, *Sinmhasan Battisi*, *Sur Sagar*, etc. *Chandrakanta* was the most popular novel of that time. I must have read it not less than sixteen times. I went through *Chandrakanta-Santati* which is in twenty-four volumes once. Perhaps, many people learnt Hindi only to go through *Chandrakanta*. In those days, books of that type were generally the rage. My thread ceremony was performed when I was ten. I used to perform my evening prayers with my father and read the *Bhagavad gita* daily. A Maharashtrian Brahmin taught me to chant, with proper accent, the Vedas and there was a time when I had memorized the entire *Gita* and Rudra. I had also read *Amarkosh* and *Laghu Kaumudi*. In 1899, when I was ten, the annual session of the Congress was held at Lucknow. My father being a delegate, I accompanied him to Lucknow. At that time the delegates' badge was a flower made of cotton. I too, got a similar badge made from the tailor and after putting it on, took a seat in the Visitors' Gallery with my cousin. At that time, speeches were generally delivered in English. Even had they been in Hindi I could not have understood much. Under such circumstances, how could I do anything else but make noise? The persons in the audience rebuked me and I ran out of the pandal. How could I understand the importance of the Congress at that time? Yet, I could know that Lokamanya Tilak, Shri Romesh Dutt and Justice Ranade were among the greatest leaders of the country. I saw those personalities there for the first time. Justice Ranade died in 1901, but I saw Shri Dutt again at the time of the Calcutta Congress in 1906.

I was admitted to school in 1902. In 1904 or 1905, I learnt a bit of Bengali and my teacher used to read to me the *Ramayana* by Krittibash. My career was greatly influenced by my father. He always taught us to behave with the servants decently and not to use bad words with them. I always abided by his teachings. The bad habit of smoking was prevalent among the students at that time also. I still remember that once there was a

fair at Ayodhya. Out of sheer fashion I bought a packet of cigarettes. On lighting a cigarette, I puffed for the first time and I felt giddy. I felt normal only after chewing a betel. I always wondered why people smoke. I never touched a cigarette since then. Of course, to lessen the Asthma trouble, I had to smoke Stramonium Cigarettes. My father always instructed us not to tell a lie. In this connection I remember an event. I was very young when someone came enquiring about my maternal uncle. I went in and told my maternal uncle that someone had come to see him. He asked me to tell him that he was not in. I told him so. My maternal uncle was greatly annoyed. Simple as I was, I could not even understand that I had done something wrong. It need not be concluded, however, that I am a great speaker of truth, yet it is true that I lie less. And whenever I speak a lie I feel ashamed of it and for a considerable time my mind is not at peace. My father's teachings serve as a caution.

I have stated above that we were always frequented by sadhus and sannyasis. One of my father's friends—Pandit Madhav Prasad Mishra—used to stay with us for months together. He knew Bengali very well and had translated *Desher Katha* into Hindi, which was later proscribed. He was a fine Hindi writer and a nationalist. I came in close contact with him. My pet name was Avinashilal. Those who knew me from childhood still address me by that name. Mishrajee was greatly influenced by the Bengali language. He changed names of all my brothers, including myself. It was he who gave me the name 'Narendra Deva'. Discourses on *Sanatan Dharma* were generally arranged at my house. In 1906, when I was studying for the Matriculation, Swami Ramtirth paid a visit to Faizabad. He was our guest. At that time, he was living on milk alone. He delivered a public lecture on 'Celibacy' in the town; and the second lecture on 'Vedanta' was held at my house. He had a striking personality. There was a lustre on his face. I was greatly influenced by his personality and later I studied all his books. He was leaving for the Himalayas on pilgrimage. Mishrajee told him that a sannyasi did not need anything. He therefore left for the Himalayas, leaving all his luggage behind and wrote from the hills—"Ram is happy".

In our school we had a very able teacher. His name was Dattatreya Bhikhaji Ranade. I was influenced by him. His method of teaching was altogether different. At that time I was studying in the VIII class but the students of my class had surpassed the students of the X class in English grammar. I always stood first in my class and my teachers were always pleased with me. But without any rhyme or reason, the Panditjee who taught us Sanskrit got annoyed with me and with my class-mates and decided to declare us unsuccessful at the annual examination. All of us were very much perturbed. At that time my class teacher—Shri Radheraman Lal—was also the librarian of our school library. We were very much

impressed by him too. Once he had renounced the world. We visited his house frequently. He had a great affection for his students. I was the custodian of the key of the library and it was I who issued the library books. I recollected that Panditjee had got two years' calendars issued in his name and it struck me that we may not be given questions from the Matriculation question papers. I solved all the questions along with my class-mates, and to our great surprise we found that all the questions were set from the same question papers. In the Examination Hall, Panditjee asked me how I fared. I replied excitedly that never before I had fared so well. He had also put certain questions from outside the course. He was forced to award me 46 marks out of a total of 50 and none of the students failed. Had I not been the assistant to the Librarian, I would have certainly failed.

I accompanied my father to the Banaras Congress in 1905. My closest association with my father created in me a love for Indian culture. That love, however, was only verbal. I did not know anything about the Indian culture but on account of that love, later on, I took Sanskrit as my subject in MA. My father having been associated with the *Bharat Dharmi Mahamandal* revered Malaviyajee came to see him at our house. He heard me reciting a chapter or more of the *Gita*. He was immensely pleased with my correct pronunciation and asked me to visit Allahabad and stay at the Hindu Boarding House after I passed my Matriculation. That was for the first time that I saw revered Malaviyajee. The simplicity of his demeanour and his sweet words left a lasting impression on me. Though I had thought of getting admission into the Central Hindu College, I had to abandon the idea for the sake of my friends.

After passing Matriculation, I went to Allahabad and stayed at the Hindu Boarding House. There were three or four class-mates with me. We were allotted a big room. That was the first occasion of my staying in a college hostel. The partition of Bengal gave birth to another party within the Congress, which was headed by Lokamanya Tilak, Shri Bipin Chandra Pal and others. Till that time I had no crystallized political views, except for respect and faith in the Indian National Congress. I participated in the Congress as a spectator in 1905. The Prince of Wales was to visit India and for his reception a proposal was moved by Shri Gokhale. Tilak opposed it vehemently but had to withdraw under pressure, and he left the pandal. It was the first voice of opposition ever heard. The Congress session was held at Calcutta in 1906.

After coming to Allahabad my thoughts started changing rapidly. The Hindu Boarding House was a centre of extremist thought. Pandit Sunderlalji was at that time the leader of the students. He was rusticated from the University for his political ideas. At that time, political matters were hotly debated day and night in the Boarding House. Readily I

became a convert to leftist ideology. Some of us participated in the Calcutta Congress session. We were housed in the Ripon College. A conflict between the Leftists and the Rightists was going on, and had Dadabhai Nowroji not been the President, the Congress would have been divided there and then. It was due to him that the danger was averted. The main items of the programme of this new party were *Swadeshi*, boycott of British goods and National Education. It was also contemplated to change the aims and objects of the Congress. During the course of his speech, Dadabhai Nowroji used the word 'Swarajya' which was subjected to a heated discussion between the two parties. Although the senior leaders were against boycott—they were of the opinion that it might give rise to jealousy and hatred—they had to accept it for the sake of Bengal. With the victory of Japan an era of awakening had started in Asia.

The Asians regained their self-confidence and the childlike faith in the honesty of the Britishers started crumbling. The educated class of that age thought that the British had come to India for their good and would themselves hand over power to Indians after they were fully trained in administration. Without removing this belief from the minds of the people, it was not possible to promote political activities. The Lokamanya did this work. The formation of the new party was declared at Calcutta. Under the auspices of this new party, two meetings were held at Calcutta. One of the meetings was held at *Bada Bazar*, in which I was also present. The special feature of this meeting was that all its speeches were delivered in Hindi. Both Shri Bipin Chandra Pal and Lokamanya Tilak spoke in Hindi. Shri Pal did not experience much difficulty in speaking Hindi but the Lokamanya used broken Hindi. *Bada Bazar* was inhabited mostly by North Indians. It was for their convenience that the speeches were delivered in Hindi. The new party had much influence in Bengal.

After the Calcutta Congress a tough competition went on between both the parties to win over the United Provinces. Great leaders of both the parties came to Allahabad and I had the opportunity to listen to them. The first leader to arrive at Allahabad was Lokamanya Tilak, whom we received at the Railway Station. A meeting was arranged for his reception by a few students. None of the local leaders participated in the reception. Someone had brought a coach for him. Letting the horse aside we wanted to pull the vehicle ourselves, but he did not accede to our request. The Lokamanya said, "Reserve that enthusiasm for a better cause." He delivered his speech in the compound of a vakil's house. The vakil was out of station. His wife had given the permission. We spread the carpet. One of the students sang *Vande Mataram* and the Lokamanya started his speech in English. The Lokamanya always used logic and reason. His speech had a sense of humour, but he was devoid of sentimentalism. He had quoted

the English belief that God helps only those who helped themselves and asked us if we considered the English greater than God. A few days later, Shri Gokhale came to Allahabad and delivered a series of speeches in the *Kayastha Pathashala*. In one of the speeches he said that if necessary, we could even stop paying taxes. Later Shri Bipin Pal came and delivered four fiery lectures. In this way the leaders of various parties visited Allahabad from time to time. Lala Lajpat Rai and Haider Raza had also come. Out of the Rightist party leaders only Gokhale had some influence over us, the students.

We took up the cause of *Swadeshi* and subscribed for the Leftist papers. We were getting the *Vandemataram*, a daily from Calcutta, and read it with great interest. Its articles were very effective. Shri Aurobindo Ghosh generally contributed to that paper. His articles impressed me to a great extent. I don't think I have missed any of his articles and I made others read them. Even after his leaving for Pondicherry, his influence on me continued and I was a regular subscriber to *Arya* for years. For many days I nursed the hope that on completion of his 'Sadhana' he would return to Bengal and re-enter politics. A request to this effect was also made to him in 1921 but he wrote to his brother, Shri Barindra, that Bengal wanted the Aurobindo of 1908 but he was no more that. If only there were 99 other persons (*karmis*) of his type, he would return to Bengal. For many days I hoped for his return, but ultimately when I was disappointed I diverted my mind from that thought. His thoughts had fire as well as truth. Being a devotee of ancient culture, I specially liked his articles. He was leading a very simple life. Those who have read his letters addressed to his wife know this well. I was much impressed by his simple living. At that time Lala Hardayal had left his scholarship and had returned from England. He had opposed the system of education prevalent in Government schools, and had written a series of fourteen articles in Punjabi on 'Our Educational Problem'. Impressed by his articles some of the students of Punjab had left education. He shouldered the responsibility of educating them. Such students were very few. Hardayaljee was a talented man. He believed that no great works are achieved without hard-labour. "Light of Asia" by Edwin Arnold had changed him through and through.

In England he was influenced by Shyamji Krishna Verma. He had prepared two syllabi for the students. I started reading books from those lists. At that time, students believing in leftist ideology read books on the Russo-Japanese war, Garibaldi and Mazzini and novels written by the terrorist writers of Russia. Babu Ramanand started the 'Modern Review' from Allahabad in 1907, which was held in respect. It was a time when we took every Bengali youth as a revolutionary. This was yet another reason that created interest in me for Bengali literature. I read novels of

Rafneshchandra Dutt and Bankim Chandra and was thus acquainted with Bengali literature to some extent. We succeeded in our vow of *Swadeshi*. We did not purchase any foreign goods at that time. On the eve of the *Magh* fair, we used to deliver speeches on *Swadeshi*. Mr. Jennings was then the Principal of our College. He was a staunch Anglo-Indian. One of the students in the hostel had a portrait of Khudiram Bose in his room. Someone informed the principal about it. One evening he came to the hostel and went straight into my friend's room. As a result, he was rusticated from the college, but Shrimati Annie Besant admitted him to the Hindu College.

Gradually, some of us established contacts with revolutionaries. Some of the revolutionaries even thought of going in for the ICS, so that in the event of a revolution they could take over the District Administration. With that end in view, four of my friends went to England. I too wanted to go in 1911 but my mother did not allow me.

In 1907, Surat witnessed a breach and the leftists left the Congress. A convention was called and the constitution of the Congress was changed. The leftists called it a Convention Congress. Taking advantage of this friction the Government suppressed the Leftist Party. Leaders were put into prison. Considering the time unfavourable some of them went abroad and started establishing Revolutionary Centres in London, Paris, Geneva and Berlin. Leftist literature was published from these places. My companions in England sent me that literature. I had received a copy of Savarkar's *War of Indian Independence* and I regularly received Hardayal's *Vandemataram*, *Talwar* from Berlin and "The Indian Sociologist" from Paris. One of my friends was imprisoned during the first Great War, while others returned to India only as barristers. Since we belonged to the Leftist Party I stopped attending the Congress sessions after 1908. So much so, that we did not even attend the Congress session held at Allahabad. In 1916, when both the parties united, we again came within the fold of the Congress.

After passing my BA, I was confronted with the problem of my future. I did not want to study law, but liked to do research in ancient history. In Muir College, I came in contact with some of the ablest professors. Dr. Ganganath Jha was particularly kind to me. In BA Prof. Brown taught me history. He was a specialist in the Medieval History of India and taught very well. It was due to him that I took history as my subject. After passing my BA, I went to Banaras to study Archaeology and came in contact with ablest professors like Dr. Venice and Prof. Norman. All the English professors at the College tried to learn Sanskrit. Very few teachers had the teaching ability of Dr. Venice. I had also a high regard for Prof. Norman. When I was at Queen's College, I met Shri Shachindranath Sanyal. He used to borrow from me literature received from abroad. It was through

him that I received information about the Revolutionaries. I had great sympathies for them but I was always against dacoity. I was not a member of any revolutionary party, yet I was personally known to many of their leaders, who confided in me and many times took my help. In 1913, when I passed my MA, my relatives persuaded me to take up law. I had no liking for that profession. But when I could not get admission in the archaeological department, I studied law with the sole idea of participating in politics while practising.

After passing my L-LB, I went to Faizabad to practise law in 1915. My thoughts matured at Allahabad and there I got a new viewpoint of life. Thus I have a kind of spiritual connection with Allahabad. I had two main interests in life — one, to read and write, and, two, to participate in politics. There has always been a conflict between the two. If I got simultaneous facility for both I felt satisfied. This facility I had at the Vidyapith and so it was the best part of my life which I devoted to the service of the Vidyapith. Even to this day, I consider the Vidyapith as my family.

In 1914, the Lokamanya was released from Mandalay Jail and started bringing his co-workers together. He got the co-operation of Shrimati Besant and two Home Rule Leagues were formed. In my province Shrimati Besant's league was established in 1915. In that connection I had a talk with Lokamanya since I wanted to open a branch of his league in Faizabad. But he did not agree with me saying that the aims and objects of both the leagues were the same. The reason behind the formation of two separate leagues was that some people did not want to join an organisation established by him, while some others did not like to be associated with any institution established by Shrimati Besant. I opened a branch at Faizabad and was elected its Secretary. The branch propagated the cause and held meetings from time to time. I had delivered my maiden speech in a meeting convened to oppose the incarceration of the Ali brothers by the Government. I was afraid of speaking in public but somehow I spoke and a few persons in the audience appreciated it too. That gave me encouragement and gradually I got rid of the hesitation. I still feel that had my first speech been a failure, I would perhaps have never gathered enough courage to speak again.

Along with the League I was also in the Congress, and was shortly on all its committees without making any effort on my part. With Mahatma Gandhi joining the Congress, the Congress started changing gradually. He did not take a prominent part in the beginning, but from 1918 onwards he played the main role. Taking up the question of *Khilafat*, he wanted to launch the non-cooperation movement but he had differences with the Lokamanya on the issue of the programme of non-cooperation. In the meeting of the All-India Congress Committee held at Banaras in June

1920, I had a talk with the Lokamanya on that issue. He told me that during his life he had never cooperated with the Government; the question was only of non-cooperation. On returning from jail he did not have the same confidence in the masses as he had before, and therefore he thought that the working programme should be more political. He was against the boycott of the Councils. He held that it was not bad if half the vacancies remained vacant but if they were filled, then the pro-Government people, calling themselves representatives, would do harm to the country. Another principle of Tilak was to place his opinion before the Congress and accept its decision whatever it might be. I was a follower of Tilak and that was why I voted against the boycott of Councils in the Congress but once the issue was decided, I accepted the decision wholeheartedly. I was not interested in practising law.

No sooner the non-co-operation proposal was passed at the Nagpur session than I left my practice. I did not lose a moment to take that decision. As I thought myself bound to the decision taken by the Congress, neither did I consult anyone nor did I think of my future. I wanted to ask my father once but thinking that if he opposed the idea it would not be possible for me to go against his wishes, I did not ask him at all. Even when he came to know about it he did not raise any objection. He only said that I should think of an independent living. And as long as he lived he left me no grounds to worry.

After the non-cooperation movement had started, Pandit Jawaharlal once came to Faizabad and told me that at Banaras the Vidyapith was being established and people wanted me to be there. I wrote to my dear friend, Shri Shivprasad. He immediately called me to Banaras. Shivprasad was my classmate and on account of similarity of thoughts, we became friends. He was a man with a generous heart. Among those who gave charity, it was he who did not want a name. He also helped the revolutionaries financially. I found the work of the Vidyapith interesting. Revered Dr. Bhagwandasji, showing his confidence in me, made me the Vice-Chairman of the Vidyapith. I started my work under his supervision.

For two years, I lived in the hostel among students. It was a sort of family. Side by side we did political work. We had gone to propagate in the villages of Banaras when the Ali brothers were sentenced at Karachi. Carrying our beddings under our arms, daily we were touring on foot. Dr Bhagwandasji resigned from the chairmanship of the Vidyapith in 1926 and made me the Chairman. I came across many new friends at Banaras. I have had very sweet relations with the workers and professors of the Vidyapith. I had great affection for Shri Sri Prakasaji. It will not be an exaggeration to say that he too had great affection for me. He started calling me Acharya, so much so that it has become a part of my name. He

admired me everywhere.

Though I knew Jawaharlalji from the time of the Home Rule Movement, it was through Shri Sri Prakasa that I came closer to him and Ganeshji. For months together I stayed at his house. He took care of me as parents would of their child. He thought that I was carefree and did not take proper care of my health. Whether my views agreed with his own or not, his love for me never diminished. Political friendship does not have a strong footing but despite difference of opinion our mutual love has never been affected. Separation of old friends is painful but if formalities are maintained, the relations are not affected. Such examples are there but very few. I do not have any of the qualities of a leader, nor do I have any ambition. This is a great weakness. I am so constituted that neither can I become a leader nor a blind follower. This does not mean that I do not want to be under discipline. I am not an individualist. I have been worshipping the leaders from a distance, but very seldom went near them. This hesitation is part of my nature. Who does not like self-praise? Who is not happy to hold good offices? But I never tried for them. I was reluctant to become the President of the Provincial Congress Committee but because of the express desire of other leaders I had to stand for it. Similarly, when Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru asked me to be on the Working Committee of the Congress, I refused. But because of his pressing request, I had to accept the invitation.

I have already stated that I am not a leader and therefore cannot form any new party or start a movement. In 1934 when Shri Jayaprakashji put up a proposal for forming the Socialist Party and wanted me to be the President of the *Sammelan*, I refused. I declined not because I did not have any faith in socialism but because I did not want to shoulder any great responsibility. I had great love for him and therefore I had to accede to his request at last. The *Sammelan* was held at Patna in May 1934. Bihar had seen an earthquake and I had gone there with the students to do relief work. There I met Dr. Lohia for the first time. I am glad to say that when the constitution of the party was drafted it was only Dr. Lohia and I who favoured complete independence within the scope of the aims and objects of the party. At last we succeeded. I had met Meherally once in 1928. Till then I did not know other friends from Bombay. I get nervous to work with unknown persons. But it was a good thing that all the main workers of the Socialist Party soon turned up like inmates of a family.

In fact, I spoke many a time in my province but I spoke in the All-India Congress Committee for the first time at Patna. Maulana Mohammed Ali had once said that Bengalis and Madrasis spoke too much in the Congress. People from Bihar seeing others speak would assemble round Rajendra Babu and urge him in their dialect to speak. People from UP would not

themselves speak and if any of them spoke he was called a fool. In our province we did not feel the necessity to speak before the great leaders. There was a time when even Pandit Jawaharlal spoke very little. But in 1934 I had to speak from the party's platform. If the party had not been formed I would not have, perhaps, dared to speak in the Congress.

For similarity of thought and for his noble personality, I was always attracted towards Pandit Jawaharlal. I have many soft memories about him. I mention here only one event. We were together in the Ahmednagar Fort. While walking we started talking about the past. He said, "Narendra Deva, had I not joined the Congress and been to jail several times, I would not have become a man." In her book, his sister Krishna has quoted one of Jawaharlal's letters which throws light on his personality. After the death of Pandit Motilal, Jawaharlal wrote to his sisters that his father's property did not belong to him—he was only a trustee. When I read that letter, my eyes became wet and I realized the greatness of Jawaharlal. He has great consideration for his colleagues, and he serves his ailing colleagues.

I got the opportunity of staying at Mahatma Gandhi's Ashram in 1942 for four months. There I witnessed how he utilized every moment of his. He had a very balanced life. He used to enquire daily about each and every patient in the Ashram. He had in mind every worker, great and small. The residents of the Ashram put before him their petty problems and he solved them to their satisfaction. Confined to bed in the Ashram, I used to think why the man who did not follow even one principle of Hinduism of the day was worshipped by innumerable Sanatanists. The learned people might have opposed him but the illiterate worshipped him. We can know the secret only when we understand that the Indian masses are most susceptible to the Shraman culture. The Hindus do not take notice of the way of life of that man who, once having renounced the world, does selfless service. The elite might criticize him, but the masses respect him. In October 1941, when I was released from jail, Mahatmaji enquired about my health and called me to the Ashram for treatment. Since I did not want myself to be a liability on Mahatmaji I gave him some excuse. But when I went to Wardha to attend the A I C C meeting and fell ill, he pressed me to stay on. My treatment started. Mahatmaji took great care of my health. One night my condition worsened. The physicians who were attending on me got nervous, though there was no real reason. At 1 o'clock in the night they went to Mahatmaji to wake him-up without my knowledge and he came to see me. It was a day of his silence. He broke his silence for my sake. Such occasions were very few. Immediately he sent a car to get doctors from Wardha. By morning I felt better. In Delhi, Sir Stafford Cripps had to have talks, Mahatmaji did not want to go to Delhi, but went when pressed. Before leaving for Delhi he told me that the question of partitioning India

would be brought forward in one form or another. That was why he did not like to go to Delhi. From Delhi he was constantly enquiring about my health on the phone. Ba too was ill at that time. He therefore returned early. He tried to bring those people nearer him who even differed with him, but were otherwise honest.

At that time Mahatmaji was thinking that he should not take food in the jail that time. Mahadev Bhai was much worried when he came to know about it. He asked me to have a talk with Mahatmaji on this issue. On that very day Dr. Lohia had come to Sevagram. A similar request was also made to him. We talked over the issue for a pretty long time. Mahatmaji gave us a patient hearing. But he could not take a final decision that day. From Bombay, when we were arrested on August 9 we were brought to Ahmednagar by special train. The train carried Mahatmaji and his party and other prominent people from Bombay. At that time also the leaders finally requested Mahatmaji not to take that step. On this very account in that fort, we kept worried too.

We were released in 1945. Shri Jawaharlal and I were released from Almora Jail on June 14. Some days after, I met Mahatmaji at Poona. He asked me about my views regarding truth and *Ahimsa* then. I replied that I had been a worshipper of Truth right from the beginning but I had my doubt whether we could snatch power from the Britishers without violence.

I have many recollections about Mahatmaji but on account of the limited time at my disposal I do not give any more.

For quite some time it was a subject of discussion in the Congress that there should be no party within the fold of the Congress. Mahatmaji was against it. After independence, I was of opinion that time was not yet ripe for us to leave the Congress because the country was passing through a crisis. The Socialist Party differed on that issue. But accepting my advice, my friends put off taking a decision. I made it clear that if the Congress formulated any such rule rendering our stay in the Congress impossible, I would be the first to leave the Congress. No one who had the slightest realization of his self-respect would stay on after such a rule was formulated. Had such a rule been formed and had the party decided to leave the Congress, it was certain that I would have abided by the directive, but I cannot say to what extent I would have favoured it. After the Congress took a decision, all my doubts cleared up and I did not take any time to take a decision. All the difficult moments which have affected my life were like this. On those occasions, events cropped up in such a manner that I lost no time in taking a decision. I consider it to be my good fortune.

Only a few years of my life are left now. I am not keeping good health, but I still have enthusiasm. Throughout my life I have fought against injustice. This is no small work. Free India needs it all the more. When I

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review my life, I feel that when my eyes are closed, I shall have the satisfaction that the work I did for the Vidyapith is permanent. I have been calling it my treasure and on that very basis my political work goes on. This is absolutely true.

FREEDOM MOVEMENT

*The Sham Constitution**

It is absolutely necessary that we should fully grasp the true purpose of the new Constitution Act. We should try to understand why the British imperialists are so anxious to force down this measure of reforms although it has been condemned by all the political parties in the country. The inwardness of the situation is that in order to crush the growing revolt of the masses and to keep in check the rising tide of the national struggle it has become necessary for imperialism to strengthen its ties with its old allies and to seek new allies within the country and thus enlarge its social basis so that it may be better able to operate against its opponents. The new constitution has been forged to form a united front of imperialism and forces of native reaction. This is why so much stress has been laid on the establishment of a Federation of Indian States and Provinces. The difficulties of establishing such an All-India Federation are obvious. Indian States are altogether different in status and character from the Provinces of British India and they are not prepared to federate on the same terms as it is proposed to apply to the Provinces. And yet a Federation composed of disparate units has been proposed and all the difficulties have been disregarded because it well serves imperial interests. In the words of the Joint Parliamentary Committee on Indian Constitutional Reform, "the presence in the Central Executive and Legislature of representatives of the Princes who have always taken so keen an interest in all matters will be weighed and considered with a full appreciation of the issues at stake".

The "grave matters" referred to in the above quotation relate to the possible danger of friction between the Governor-General and the Legislature over the Army Budget. The Committee goes so far as to say that there can be no case for introducing responsibility at the centre in a purely British India Federation.

*Presidential Address at the Gujarat Socialist Party conference held in Ahmedabad June 23 and 24, 1935

The Legislators have proceeded on the safest hypothesis and have guarded the Constitution in all possible manner. The Constitution has been hedged in on all sides with so many safeguards that it is only a mockery to call it a constitution, conferring a large measure of reasonable government.

In the provincial sphere also there will be bi-cameral legislatures in those provinces where landlordism, a special creation of British rule, prevails. The second chambers are being created to enable propertied classes to defeat, delay or revise any piece of legislation which in their opinion is ill-considered and is prejudicial either to their own interests or to those of imperialism.

The franchise for the Second Chamber will be based on high property qualifications or a qualification based on service in certain distinguished public offices. Special interests like landlordism, commerce and industry have been further protected by giving them an adequate representation. It is difficult to understand why in an agricultural country where the economic and political power is wielded by landlords in rural areas, landlordism is treated as a special interest to which special seats may also be allotted.

The "vested interests" have received special protection and it is recommended that all grants of land held under various names such as Jagir, Taluk, Inam, Watan and Muafi and the rights enjoyed by Talukdars of Oudh under Sanads will be respected and it will be beyond the powers of legislature and executives to propose any modification of such rights without obtaining the prior consent of the Governor-General or the Governor as the case may be.

The Constitution will further safeguard all private property against expropriation except under very special circumstances and that too, in case of property of a specific character, on payment of adequate compensation; and general legislation proposing transfer to public ownership of some particular class of property or extinction or modification of rights of individuals in it shall require the previous sanction of the Governor-General or Governor to its introduction. In any case in which the rights are modified or certain property is expropriated, compensation will have to be paid for the interests so affected by the proposed legislation. In the case of the permanently settled provinces it has been enacted that if a bill to amend the land revenue system is passed by the Legislature the Governor should be instructed to reserve it for the signification of His Majesty's pleasure.

Thus it would be almost impossible to secure any social legislation worth the name for the benefit of the masses through the new legislatures. The agrarian problem is growing more and more acute everyday. The price of land is falling off, and the already little surplus which the agriculturist had,

has vanished by the abnormal fall in prices of agricultural produce. The level of subsistence is falling below the starvation point. The agrarian problem demands a radical solution and if nothing substantial is done to improve the peasants' lot their condition will go from bad to worse. But the vested interests in land have been scrupulously safeguarded in the new constitution and the modification of the landlord's status or curtailment of his privileges are not allowed.

There is not a single proposal to safeguard the real interest of the masses and this is as it should be because we should not forget that the basis of imperialism is the exploitation of the masses subjected to its yoke in its colonial possessions. The imperialism at home confronted by an economic crisis of the first order could only weather the storm by large reduction in wages and doles of the unemployed at home and by extorting extra profits from its colonial possessions.

India, like China, is a land of small peasants. The peasantry is steeped in heavy indebtedness. The fragmentation of his holdings, the utter inadequacy of his resources to make technical improvements in agriculture, the abnormal fall in prices of agricultural produce, the high rents on land and so many illegal and extra dues the peasant has to pay makes him a pathetic figure in the whole situation. The workers' standard of living is being attacked. Their level of subsistence is appallingly low. A large number of workers are being thrown out of employment every day. The petty bourgeoisie are also being pauperised. The educated young men of the middle class do not find any employment and there are so many cases of suicide reported everyday of able-bodied youngmen who are driven to acts of desperation for their inability to earn their living by honest work. Nothing is done to prevent this appalling waste of human life, to mitigate this human misery visible on all sides, and if people's representatives want to find a solution of the problem of poverty they are not allowed to do so in the name of the sacred institution of property.

The Constitution is further designed to suppress the freedom of the people; and although in the Provinces, Law and Order will be transferred subjects, yet the reservation of large powers in the hands of Inspector-General of Police in the matter of internal organisation and discipline of the police force is certainly inconsistent with responsible government in the Provinces. The Police Rules and the Statutes on which these Rules are based will not be amended without the Governor's consent. It is further provided that no records relating to intelligence affecting terrorism should be disclosed to any one other than such persons within the Provincial Police Force as the Inspector-General may direct, or such other public officers outside that Force as the Governor may direct. The Indian Ministers will not thus be able to satisfy themselves whether the information on the basis

of which a prosecution has been started is trustworthy or not. And as the recruitment of the superior Police Force will continue to be made by the Secretary of State and as a special responsibility is laid on the Governor to keep the Police Force free from political influences and safeguard their 'legitimate' interest, it will not be possible for Indian Ministers to exercise any control on high police officers and for the matter of that on the Police Force in general. The Police have been further indemnified for all their past acts and no civil or criminal proceeding can be instituted against the police in respect of acts done in good faith and done or purported to be done in the execution of duty. The existing police zulum will thus continue unchecked and unmitigated by the Indian Ministers.

The Provincial services will be regarded as Crown services and the Governor will be recognized as their head. Their interests will be adequately protected by the Statute and the very watchful Governor will be there in the exercise of his special responsibility to see that their rights and privileges do not suffer in any manner. Appointments to these services would run in the name of the Governor and no public servant will be subject to dismissal save by the order of the Governor.

In the matter of appointments made by the Secretary of State, control will be exercised by him over the conditions of service of such officers. In short the Services will not be under the control of the ministers except in a general manner.

The Governor shall have a special responsibility in respect of any grave menace to the peace and tranquillity of the Province and large powers are vested in him to enable him to discharge these responsibilities in a proper manner. In due discharge of his special responsibilities, the Governor has not only the right to overrule his ministers but has also special powers to enable him to execute any course of action which requires legislative provision or the provision of supply. He can issue any executive order and can dismiss and replace the minister or ministers if he or they are unwilling to administer their charge on lines recommended by the Governor. The Governor can in that case also suspend the constitution by proclamation and can assume to himself all such powers as he may think necessary. Special powers are also given to him for combating terrorism and in the exercise of such powers he can, if necessary, assume charge of any branch of Government for combating such activities. He can also create, if he so likes, a new machinery for the purpose.

Under "grave menaces" are included not only terrorism and other subversive movements, for the Report points out that "there are many other branches of administration in which ill-advised measures may give rise to a menace to the peace or tranquillity of the Province; and we can readily conceive circumstances in connection with land revenue or public

health, to mention no others, which might well have this effect." Thus, if in the opinion of the Governor any particular measure affecting the land revenue constitutes a menace to the peace of the Province, he can take action under his special powers with respect to any department of Government. He will also have supplies necessary for the discharge of his special responsibilities.

Elections to the Federal Legislature will be indirect contrary to unanimous Indian opinion which favours direct elections. Dyarchy will be introduced at the centre and the Indian Finance Minister will have control of only 20 p.c. of his budget. The Governor-General will have special responsibilities like those of the Governor in the Provinces.

A Statutory Railway Board will be set up and entrusted with the actual administration of Railways in India. The Board will be practically independent of the Federal Legislature.

British commercial interests will be protected and the Governor-General will have added to his special responsibilities the responsibility of 'preventive measures, legislative or administrative, which would subject British goods imported into India from the United Kingdom, to discriminatory or penal treatment'. The principle is laid down that the United Kingdom and India must approach their trade problem in a spirit of reciprocity. The British shipping will not be subjected by law in British India to any discrimination whatsoever. Companies incorporated in the United Kingdom should, when trading in India, be deemed to have complied with the provisions of Indian law relating to certain matters, though companies which engage in trade or industry subsequent to the date of the constitution will have to be incorporated under Indian law and will have further to satisfy certain conditions before they can be eligible for the grant of bounties and subsidies.

The proposed constitutional changes would involve an additional recurring expenditure which will impose fresh burdens on the Indian tax-payer. Subventions will have to be granted from federal revenues to the deficit provinces and the establishment of the Federal Court, Provincial Autonomy and the enlargement of legislatures and electorates will also add to the recurring cost of administration.

This sham Constitution will only serve to add to the burdens of the tax-payer and will forge fresh chains for our enslavement. The provincial resources will be so slender that no Indian Minister will be in a position to develop nation-building departments.

Before we conclude our criticism of the new Constitution it is necessary to notice two more proposals in the new scheme. I mean the proposals to transfer Aden to the British Government and to separate Burma from India. The strategic value of Aden to Britain is of great importance and the

transfer is proposed chiefly on the ground that it is of great value to the Empire in the East as a whole from the strategic standpoint. In the case of Burma different considerations were present. Burma is economically rich in oil, lead, tin and timber.

From the above analysis of the proposals it is clear that the new constitution is a retrograde measure designed to strengthen imperial interests and to tighten further Britain's iron grip on India.

OUR PLEA FOR WRECKING

It was but natural for the Congress to signify its intention to reject this sham constitution which is only a device to perpetuate British domination in India. It would have been much better if reasons for its rejection had been fully and well stated and the real character of the White Paper proposals had been brought out in Congress resolutions. The Congress also stated its considered opinion that the only satisfactory alternative was a constitution drawn up by a Constituent Assembly elected on the basis of adult suffrage. But the thing that really matters is to see how this policy of rejection is to be carried out. In our opinion the only possible, honourable and consistent course open to rejectionists after this declaration is to follow a policy of determined resistance and obstruction and to make it impossible for the new constitution to work. A policy of rejection necessarily implies refusal to accept ministerial and other offices in the gift of the Government. It is only in this way that we can expose the hollowness of the constitution and compel its suspension. We must realise that the new constitution impedes our progress towards our goal and the sooner the obstacle is removed from our path the speedier would be our progress.

It would not have been necessary for me to dilate on this subject if the Parliamentary Board had followed in the Assembly the old tradition of the Swaraj Party and if an insidious propaganda had not been started by certain responsible individuals in favour of working the reforms.

When the Swaraj Party was revived at Ranchi in 1934 the policy and programme which it adopted was significantly silent on the question of acceptance of office and the whole programme was conceived in a spirit of working the Reforms. It clearly demonstrated the great change that had come over the mentality of our parliamentarians after the liquidation of the Civil Disobedience movement. Perhaps the defeat the country had sustained in the struggle and the absence of an atmosphere of civil resistance in the country had emboldened them to give up the old tactics of obstruction. The general mentality of the Parliamentary Board and the inability of its representatives in the Assembly to remain faithful to their election pledges and their eagerness to obtain easy though empty

victories over the Government by agreeing to give up their professions and principles in order to enable them to secure the co-operation of the other parties in the Assembly—all these combined do not encourage us to hope that there will be any determined effort to secure the rejection of the reforms.

On the other hand, a favourable atmosphere is being silently created for the working of the reforms and the mind of the nation is being steadily prepared step by step for the acceptance of such a policy. The silence that is being maintained on all sides is certainly strengthening the hands of those who advocated such a policy.

In a period of reaction it is all the more necessary to be cautious and circumspect lest the more forward and active should steal a march over you and confront you with more or less accepted decisions. Delay is always dangerous on such occasions and he who acts with alacrity and resoluteness has the best chance of success. Therefore, if we do not at once mobilise public opinion in favour of a wrecking policy all will be lost. The rank and file must quickly assert itself, take a decisive attitude and make it known to those in authority that no tampering with the policy of rejection will be tolerated by it.

The future of the Congress will much depend on the decision of this single question. The whole movement stands in danger of being deflected from its revolutionary path; and if the Congress is again made to travel the old barren path of constitutionalism and reformism it will land itself into a morass from which it will not be possible for it to extricate itself.

The question is one of great importance and its decision should not be left in the hands of the Parliamentary Board. The Congress should give a clear mandate without any equivocation.

A special pleading for a wrecking policy should not be needed in the case of a party pledged to complete independence. A party working for complete independence can at no stage enter into a compromise with imperialism. It has to carry on the struggle relentlessly until the goal is reached. It should in no case take upon itself the responsibility of working a constitution imposed by the British Parliament whose authority to frame a constitution for India has been challenged by the Congress.

Last, but not the least, the acceptance of ministerial offices, whether for working the reforms or for wrecking them, will certainly sow an illusion in the minds of the people that the new constitution has some intrinsic worth and it will thus unconsciously change the psychology of the whole nation in favour of a constitutional struggle.

CONCLUSION

India holds the key in her hands to the liberation of many countries in

the East. Because of Britain's imperial interests in India the territories lying between the Red Sea and the Persian Gulf are of vital concern to Great Britain. If Egypt's independence is not complete and British troops guard the Suez Canal it is because it commands the sea route to Britain's Indian possessions. Britain maintains air bases in Iraq and guards them with troops because it is interested in maintaining the inviolability of her air communications with India.

Those countries in the East which are in bondage to British imperialism know fully well that India's freedom means their own freedom and it is for this reason that they have always looked up to India for political guidance. The Indian national movement has made a deep impression upon these countries and they have more or less made use of Congress tactics in their struggle for freedom.

A realisation of the fact that we are custodians of the liberties of so many peoples should inspire us to action and we should see that the national movement is soon liberated from its reactionary tendencies. Our presence in the Congress should be a guarantee that it will follow a right course of action but this is possible only if we play our part well. Let us by our exemplary conduct and by constructive work among the masses broaden the basis of our struggle and thereby win the deliverance of our people and strengthen the progressive forces in all countries of the East.

*The Constituent Assembly**

Before I proceed with the debate on the resolution¹ given below I feel it necessary to enter a caveat. You know that this resolution has been placed before this House in accordance with the mandate of the Congress. There seems to be some doubt and misapprehension about this resolution. The

* Acharya Narendra Deva wrote his recollections in Hindi of which an English version was published in the book "A commemoration volume" edited by B.V. Keskar and V.K.N. Menon.

¹ (The Indian Constituent Assembly is scheduled to meet at an early date. It is therefore of particular interest to note how the idea of the Constituent Assembly has grown in Indian politics. In 1937 the U.P. Legislative Assembly, like other provincial legislatures debated the following resolution

"This Assembly is of opinion that the Government of India Act, 1935, in no way represents the will of the nation and is wholly unsatisfactory as it has been designed to perpetuate the subjection of the people of India. The Assembly demands that this should be replaced and replaced by a constitution for a free India framed by a Constituent Assembly elected on the basis of adult franchise, which allows the Indian people full scope for developments according to their needs and desires."

Notice for moving this resolution was given by Pandit Govind Ballabh Pant, the Premier of U.P. In his absence it was moved by Smt. Vijayalaxmi Pandit (Minister for Local Self Government).

Two amendments of special interest moved to this resolution were on behalf of the Muslim League and the Independent Party (Zamindars).

The Muslim League amendment moved by Mr. Muhammad Ismail Khan read as follows, "Provided that in the absence of an agreed settlement the measure and method of representation of the Muslims to the Constituent Assembly shall be the same as that provided in the Communal Award and provided further that the Constituent Assembly shall not be competent to alter or vary the personal law or the existing civil, political and religious rights of the Muslims without the consent of three-fourths of the Muslim representatives."

The other amendment championed by Nawab Dr. Sir Muhammad Ahmad Said Khan ran: "Provided that landlords, depressed classes and other minority communities shall receive adequate and special representation on the Constituent Assembly and that the Constituent Assembly shall not interfere with lawful and legitimate rights and interests in private property,"

Acharya Narendra Deva in his speech (4th September, 1937) gives a lucid exposition of the social content behind the idea of the Constituent Assembly. He also made an effective reply to the two amendments.—Editor.)

resolution is not as simple as it seems to be. It involves complicated and intricate ideas. Before a vote of the House is taken on this question, I would like to state for the information of my opposition friends that the Congress stands for complete independence. Independence means severance from all British connexions. We do not subscribe to the doctrine of imperialism. We know that this imperialism is only a decadent form of capitalism and if we want to build a new social order and to remove the present gross inequalities in our society, we should open out a new era of progress and culture not only for the aristocracy but also for the masses. A gentleman on the other side has told us that he stands for democracy. But he is against socialism. My friend seems to forget that socialism alone stands for fullest democracy. Democracy of the capitalist order is a sham democracy. Political democracy is meaningless and farcical unless it is accompanied by economic equality and unless it stands for the economic emancipation of the masses. We want fullest democracy for the vast masses of our people and not only for a few classes. We want to make available to our poor people the treasures of knowledge which have been inherited by us from past generations. We want to remove all inequalities in the matter of economic life. Therefore, it is socialism alone which stands for full democracy. A change has come over our society in many matters and new elements have been introduced in the body politic. If the decadent classes want to increase their lease of life they must take note of the change and adjust themselves accordingly.

I want to state on behalf of the Congress organisation that the Congress wants to make it emphatically clear that it does not want any imperialist hold over India. It stands for the emancipation of the people while imperialism stands for exploitation of the masses and for all the barbarous practices which are associated with fascism which is only an expression of imperialism in its last stage of decay. The reactionary forces in the world are standing in the way of further advance and progress. They are naturally anxious to maintain themselves and to increase their length of life and therefore they have recourse to methods which can be truly called barbaric. Therefore we do not stand for imperialism. When I say this, I do not mean that we are at war with the British people. I love the British people and I want that Indians should initiate their virtues.

What I am against is the system and not the people. We are not actuated by feelings of bitterness. We have no quarrel with the British people. The British people as such are not ruling over us but it is a small oligarchy in England wielding economic power which is the real governing class. I want to state it once more that the Congress is wedded to the policy of destruction of British imperialism. We however wish to retain friendly relations with British if that be possible and if our interests demand but we

must have absolute freedom to shape our own destiny according to our needs and desires.

The second point I would like to emphasise is our attitude towards the Constituent Assembly. A gentleman on the other side has moved an amendment—a very small amendment, as he characterised it. He wants to incorporate one single word and that word is “immediate”. It sounds so modest and so pleasant. They want us to accept it. But if you analyse it carefully, you will find that this amendment is not so simple as it looks. That single word would negate the whole idea that lies behind this resolution. We do not want that this Constituent Assembly should be summoned by British Parliament. We refuse to have anything to do with the British Parliament in the framing of our economic and political structure. So take it from me, that the Constituent Assembly is a thing which can only be created in a semi-revolutionary situation.

We should have an Assembly which will be able to see that the will of the people is carried out and it is possible only when we become independent of the British Government. We have to mobilise the masses and organise them so that we may be able to bring about a revolution, non-violent of course. That revolution will lead to the convocation of an Assembly which has the power to frame or amend its constitution. We want to generate that power so that the demand of the people may become irresistible and may not be spurned by others. We do not make any demand upon the British Government that the Constituent Assembly is going to be our slogan in the future and that it represents the ideals and aspirations of the Indian people. We want to indicate to the Government that that is the road on which we want to travel and that we do not want to deflect from this revolutionary path. I know that various factors have contributed to make the discussion somewhat unreal and I admit that the Government also has had its due share in it.

It can very well realise the difficulties of the Government in this matter. I know that the Government has its own limitations. It has to exercise a good deal of caution; it has to be reticent on many occasions. It has to be soft and sweet and then it has to satisfy so many interests. It has to win the confidence of those who are in opposition. The influence of the place is also inevitable. You have given them the right side of the House. The right side of the House has always been associated with those who have been friends in tradition of the privileged classes. It seems to me that the Government have been influenced by this new environment. But the rank and file of the Congress party suffer from no such limitations. I am not surprised at the attitude of the Opposition in this matter.

The old Nationalist Agriculturist Party always stood for reaction. It tried to mislead the masses but the masses refused to be misled. Nawab Sir

Muhammad Yusuf said that British Imperialism could be converted into British Commonwealth. But this task is as impossible of achievement as it is to convert a *taluqdar* into a true agriculturist. The big *zamindars* adopted this name thinking that it was a very auspicious name and would serve their purpose well. Their prophecy, however, was falsified and they suffered a big rout in elections. Their political fortunes are at their lowest ebb and I have my sympathies with them. You have been generous to them in letting them have a place which they now occupy under your behest.

The Opposition is given the left side of the House which is associated in history with the defence of the right of the people. You did your best to rehabilitate them in the public eye but unfortunately for them they refused to be influenced by their environment and take advantage of the new situation. They openly came out as opponents of the right of the people. I find the Nationalist Agriculturist Party has been rechristened as "Independent Party". May I appeal to the party to be true to the spirit and letter of that name? They must vote for the independence of India which means severing the British connexion.

I want to tell them that if they want to become an active force in Indian politics, if they want their opinions should count in the counsels of the nation they should range themselves on the side of progress and we shall all welcome them. We do not expect them to advance rapidly on the new road. Let them walk slowly and steadily on the road which is indicated to them and we shall be satisfied. We know that they have made some advance already. They were compelled to advance a step owing to the exigencies of elections. I would like them to go a little further. I would like to tell them that a new idea has been born in this land and that has come to stay. It has passed the stage of infancy. It has grown in manhood. It is going to live and live in a rich measure. As it is a social idea, it will soon acclaim its fulfilment. If they want to move in the advanced times let them join the fold of those who stand for freedom. If they cannot do so, let them choose their own course. But in no case they should come in our way and prove an obstacle. It has been said by Sir Nawab Mahammad Yusuf that socialism is the product of the West and that must be rejected as such. The idea of democracy has also come from the West and we have accepted it without criticism. We are simply enamoured of the British Parliamentary practice without, however, thinking for a moment that it is an exotic plant which is not indigenous to the soil. But that system in the West now demands a radical change. We, however, hesitate to change it. We hesitate to accept a new proposition.

Now it has been said that the *zamindars* of this province have been paragons of virtue. They have sacrificed a great deal for the people and for their country. They claim to be their *ma-baps*. But they have been disowned

and their title to act as natural leaders of the people has been repudiated. The peasantry have practically declared that they have no confidence in them. When the *zamindars* ask us that their privileges should be preserved and maintained intact, even without the slightest modification, they seem to forget the origin of their own titles. They are the creatures of British rule. The Oudh Estates Act, under which estates were conferred on the *taluqdars* of Oudh on the reoccupation of Oudh after the mutiny, laid down conditions of loyalty and service to the Government. I regard the *sanads* as so many charters of slavery for them. They, however, regard them as their *Magna Carta*. It has been made clear in the Act itself that the Government reserved to itself the right to protect the peasants from extortion. If we are to protect their interests, are we not to protect the interests of the masses, the interests of the vast millions of our people? Therefore we say that we can give no assurance that their present privileges would not be touched. We do not want to tie the hands of the coming generations. It would be simply futile on our part to make such an attempt. The Statesman of Calcutta, an Anglo-Indian daily which is not a friend of the Congress, has said that the land system in this country is the greatest inequity on this planet. We want to get rid of this inequality as soon as possible.

Now I would like to say a few words about the amendment which has been moved on behalf of the Muslim League Party. I know and it is my sincere belief that the various communal groups in this land whether they belong to Hindu or Muslim community think more and more of their own narrow and sectional class interests and they do not think much about the broad questions in which the Hindu and Muslim masses are vitally interested. The more important questions are relegated to the background. They think about their petty necessities of life. They do not care for the masses.

I know that the *zamindars* want to improve the lot of the agriculturists by shifting their burden to the shoulders of the money-lenders. It is said that the tenant is born in debt, lives in debt and dies in debt. But I will not absolve the landholders from their large share of the responsibility in the matter. The feudal landlords say that moneylenders and usurers are alone responsible for the present poverty of the masses and want to exonerate themselves from their share of the responsibility. It is quite easy for any class to shift its own burden on to the shoulders of others, but honesty requires that every class must frankly avow the real position and must accept its own responsibility. I want to assure every Muslim friend belonging to the Muslim League Party that we are so solicitous about the protection and safeguarding of the rights of minorities as they can possibly be. I believe that it is the duty of the majority community to win the confidence of the minorities. I believe that it is not enough for a majority to

think that it is doing justice to the minorities but it is its duty to see further and say that the duty of the majority community is to be generous to the minorities. Let me assure you that we the members of the National Congress do not recognise any difference of caste, creed and colour. These distinctions are absolutely meaningless to us. We recognise the rights of the minorities and think it our duty to safeguard their interests. But to lay down the law today for those coming in future is a bad policy and is unnecessary and only shows their uneasiness about the matter. Can you tie the hands of the future Muslims?

I want my friends to note that there is a ferment in the world of Islam today. The Islamic countries are building their house on the basis of race and nationalism. The whole world of Islam has been powerfully influenced by the ideas of the West and the old medieval institutions are being replaced everywhere by modern institutions. My friends opposite, I am sure, intensely dislike such a state of affairs. But is there any guarantee that the Indian Muslims will never come to believe in the necessity of altering their mode of life? The future generations of Indian *Mussalmans* may very well come in line with the advanced thought of the world of Islam and demand a uniform code of law for the whole country. Will they prevent the future representatives of the various religious communities whether they be Hindus or Muslims from voicing the feelings of the people and putting them into effect? But if the *Mussalmans* would wish otherwise and prefer formal law their wishes would certainly be respected. Therefore I would ask my Muslim friends to think twice and even thrice before they insist on moving their amendment.

As regards the question of method of representation, which is the subject of another part of the amendment that has been moved on behalf of the Muslim League Party, I think it is tabled only in the interest of a small section of that community. It is only the upper classes which are interested in this matter. But even they have begun to think otherwise where their interests seem to demand a change in the method. I may tell you it may be a sort of bold prophecy that within a few years you will find that those Muslims who are a majority in some provinces will come forward and ask for joint electorates and the *Hindus* of such provinces will come forward to oppose such proposals. Welcome signs are not wanting even today. If you take the case of Punjab, what is the Muslim Premier of that Province doing? He is very much in favour of having a system of joint representation and he is putting forth his efforts in that direction. Therefore, I say with great respect that this part of the amendment has been moved not in the interests of the Muslim masses but in the interests of the Muslim upper classes who are dominating the whole group today. I will not take more time of the House as I am afraid I have already transgressed the limits of indulgence.

The real reason why the Opposition is afraid of complete independence is that they know that either the State must dominate property or the property must dominate the State. We find that at present property is dominating the state. They regard property as a sacred institution which cannot be modified in any manner. That is why they are anxious that India's connexion with British Imperialism must not cease and must be retained at any cost. While the Muslims of the upper classes are of this view, the Muslim masses are steeped in debt, poverty and degradation and we want to extricate them from this deplorable condition. The solution of the problem lies in winning the freedom for the broad issues and that is possible only if the State takes over general control of the means of production in the interest of the whole community. The institution of property is not sacred in our eyes and if the Muslim masses are to live a decent life, suitable modifications will have to be made in the institution of property and for having a free hand in the matter, complete independence is an absolute necessity. With these few words I commend the resolution for the acceptance of the House.

*The Fight for Freedom**

I want to assure the minority groups in this House that it will be our special duty to see that fairness and justice are meted out to them and I want them to note that it will be the special endeavour of the Congress Party to see that they get a real chance to speak on every matter which is discussed here, that they get a real opportunity to ventilate their grievances and that they get all the information they wish to elicit from the Government. I hope you will always assist us in this task and I wish to give them this assurance that you will always have our support and cooperation in this matter.

But there is an important point to which I would like to draw your special attention. As the leader of the party in the legislature and also it is the unanimous wish of the Party that you should refuse to be guided by the traditions that are followed in the foreign democratic countries of the West. I am in perfect agreement with the Leader of the Muslim League Party that you should evolve a new conception of the Speaker's office, establish a new tradition and strike a new line of policy for this House. In stating this, I am placing before you the considered opinion of the Congress Party. Before deciding this matter you have to take stock of the whole situation as it exists today in India and also to note the fact that you have to march onwards in the battle of freedom. It is not a time for any Indian to keep away from the battlefield. We cannot afford to lose your valuable guidance and advice at a critical juncture like this and after all in the view of the Congress, this programme in the legislature is only an infinitesimal part of the entire programme.

We stand for complete independence. We are a national organisation.

* Babu Purshottamdas Tandon was unanimously elected Speaker of the UP Legislative Assembly on 31 July, 1937. He was warmly felicitated by all parties in the House. In his speech, Acharya Narendra Deva not only offered congratulations to his distinguished colleague but also expressed the hope that he would evolve new conventions for the Speaker's office and continue to take part actively in India's struggle for Independence. The speech was made in the UP Legislative Assembly—*Editor*,

We are not a sectional organisation, and in any case we cannot be considered to represent any single community or a section of vested interests. We are here to represent the entire population of India and whether the minority groups agree with me or not, we claim to represent them also. I want to emphasise the fact that the Congress is not a sectional organisation. It always honestly and conscientiously seeks to discover the will of Indian people as a whole and to give expression to it. I know that those who do not happen to see eye to eye with us on many questions, do realise that it is the great Indian National Congress, which has raised the dignity of the Indian people in the eyes of the world. It is due to the Indian National Congress that Indians are respected today abroad. Why is that India is in the forefront of the world politics today? If you open the pages of any foreign newspapers, whether published in America or elsewhere in the western countries, you will find that India is being mentioned constantly. It is the Congress which has raised our status and has raised us in the opinion of the world. I will ask you to keep this thing before you and also to take into consideration the fact that the constitution which we are asked to work has been forced upon us in the teeth of universal opposition and that we want to end it at the earliest moment and replace it by a constitution based on the independence of India. Therefore, I would request you to strike a new line and evolve a new tradition and give us a new lead which will be followed by people who may be similarly circumstanced like us.

But I would like to make it perfectly clear that I do not want you to use your influence and your position in building up the political fortunes of your party. Fullest freedom must be given to every political group and every individual in this House to express his views. I think that it will be very sad indeed, if you decide to leave the political organisation to which you belong and if you decide to cease to be a political leader so long as you occupy this chair. I have intimated to you the earnest wish of the Party and I have no doubt that in this matter you will take all the facts into consideration and decide upon the course which will best commend itself to you. I need say nothing more. Once again, with your permission, I would tender my felicitations and I would offer my most sincere and warm congratulations to you on your elevation to this high office.

*Lessons of the Crisis**

Neither the recent constitutional crisis nor its fading out was undesirable from our viewpoint. If anything, they strengthen our contention.

We have maintained from the beginning that if the Congress desired to use the constitution in a revolutionary way to increase its strength and if it spurns to settle down to work *a la* reformist organisations, such clashes and crises become inevitable. And we have always emphasised that the success of our proposition to such a situation would depend on the consciousness we have roused among the people and the organisational strength we have mobilised.

This crisis must be an eye-opener to those who were envisaging a long period of parliamentary activities. We have now ample evidence to show that the British Government desires not to permit the Congress Ministries to function unreservedly.

The British Government have realised that their difficulties are not eased by an "understanding" with the Congress. The opposition to the imperialist federation remains as unbending as ever. They had to postpone repeatedly the much heralded visit of the British King of India. In the country the influence of the Congress Left is daily growing. The Government are not anxious, therefore, to keep the Congress in office.

The international situation, for the capitalist ruling class of Great Britain, is not as tense as before, the Mediterranean danger is relaxing with the overtures to Italy. The constitutional crisis in India, in this context, was not, therefore, particularly disturbing for the British Government.

But the issue on which the crisis was provoked was unlikely to safeguard its position and imperialism had, therefore, to bend in the end. The other

The Congress Socialist Weekly, Bombay, March 5, 1938.

*The refusal of the Governors of U.P. and Bihar to permit the respective Congress Ministries to release all political prisoners created a political crisis. Pandit Gobind Ballabh Pant, the Premier of U.P. and Babu Shri Krishna Sinha, the Premier of Bihar, thereupon handed over the resignations of their respective ministries. This was on the eve of the Haripura Session of the Congress in February, 1938.

political parties were one with the Congress on the issue involved. Even the *taluqdars* could not muster enough courage to form interim ministry. They knew that it would be impossible for them to collect rents and that they would, in all probability, be faced with a serious situation.

The world opinion, on the question, was with the Congress. There was no occasion to resort to article 126(5) of the Government of India Act (1935) as the Viceroy had done. There was not the least danger of the peace and tranquillity of the country being seriously jeopardised by the release of the political prisoners.

The Government had, in the end, to climb down and accept the demand of the Congress. But this peaceful fading out of the crisis does not mean that the Government-Congress relations will henceforth be harmonious. On the contrary it shows that the Government are on the look out for a more opportune issue and the crisis that will be created will be more serious and extensive. The new constitution inheres crisis. Our attitude to the new constitution and the existing relationship between British and India make such a clash inevitable.

But such constitutional crisis can be adequately utilised only when the parliamentary and the extra-parliamentary activities of the Congress are used to rouse the political consciousness of the people. In other words, the masses have to be organised on the basis of their economic demands and their revolutionary mentality developed to a pitch where they are ready to wage the final battle with imperialism.

The Congress Ministers must take the lesson of this crisis and direct their work in the above-suggested direction. The Government must not be allowed to catch us unprepared, to thrust a struggle on us when we are not in a position to face it. The legislative programme of the Congress must, therefore, be urgently pushed through.

The awakening in the country that the leftists have brought about has played a significant part in resolving the recent crisis. At the critical time the Left lined up with the Congress leadership and gave a magnificent demonstration of unity—a demonstration that disconcerted the imperialists.

It is unfortunate that certain sections of the Congress should continue to misunderstand the activities of left-wingers. The Congress leadership today does not put the same value on mass struggles as the leftists do. But it should realise that but for the strength of the mass-consciousness behind the Congress this crisis would not have ended so easily. The Congress will fail to face adequately the coming conflicts and crises if attention is not rivetted on strengthening the masses. The wisdom and sagacity of the leadership lie in rallying all anti-imperialist forces together in furthering the organised strength of the people.

*A Dissenter's Note**

It is sought to amend the present Article 5(c) by the insertion of the words or any other between the words "communal" and "organisation". The amendment seems apparently unexceptionable but in my opinion, no case has been made out for the introduction of these words. The clause as amended is further liable to be misused as it places large powers in the hands of the Working Committee for banning class organisations or political groups and parties within the Congress. Such a demand has already been made in certain quarters and it would appear as if the proposed change is being recommended to satisfy that demand. The Congress has no doubt the right to ban organisations which are anti-national and whose political objectives and policies are in conflict with those of the Congress, and such a right can be exercised whenever a clear case has been established.

It is also open to Provincial Congress Committees to take disciplinary action against those individual members of the Congress who indulge in activities which are opposed to the Congress objectives and policies. But certainly it would be highly improper to prevent Congressmen from participating in class organisations whose political objectives is the same as that of the Congress but whose economic programme may not for the moment be identical with that of the Congress.

In my humble judgment if ever any action is taken against such class organisations under the amended clause, it would lead to disastrous results. It would not only lead to discord and disharmony in the Congress ranks but will alienate other anti-Imperialist organisations from the Congress.

The second point on which I differ from my colleagues, relates to the proposed change in Article 7(b). The present system of election to the AICC on the principle of single transferable vote is proposed to be substantially abolished. Under the new arrangement only one-third of the seats will be filled by the present method of elections.

Right of election to the AICC by proportional representation by single

transferable vote has been exercised by political minorities since 1935 and it is generally cherished by them specially at the present moment when party feelings run high and an atmosphere of mutual suspicion prevails in the Congress. The withdrawal of such a right at the present moment is inopportune. It is liable to be interpreted as an attempt to drive out minorities from the AICC.

Various political groups within the Congress should have the fullest opportunity to influence and mould the policy of the Congress and as the AICC also functions as the Committee for the Open Session, political groups which are in a minority today will certainly not be in a position to influence the decisions of the Congress when the new rule is put into operation. The fact that one-third of the seats will continue to be filled by the present method of election does not substantially alter the position. The communal minorities also take advantage of the present provision and get some representation on the AICC. But after discontinuance of the present system in a large measure, it would not be possible for them also to secure any representation worth the name on the AICC.

It has been pointed out that the present system of election to the AICC suffers from some defects which have to be remedied. In my opinion it should not be difficult to remedy these defects while substantially retaining the system.

Again it has been nobody's case that the present system of election to the AICC has led to corruption in the Congress.

• To safeguard the organisation against corruption and bogus membership the session of the Indian National Congress at Tripuri authorised the AICC "to take all steps that may be necessary to attain that end (to remove the abuses in the enrolment of members, elections, etc.) including the Constitution". The committee appointed for the purpose consisted of the President, the Gen Secy., Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru and Acharya Narendra Deva.

*The Indian Struggle**

The march of events in the world and India is unfolding the prospect of an early struggle for independence in our country. Step by step, our national leadership is being forced to prepare for a final combat with British Imperialism. In such a situation what should radical forces in India do? What is that line that will stiffen the national leadership and force imperialism to abdicate? Attacking the national leadership for its past and present incapacity and risking a disorganisation of the struggle or backing it in the attempt to move the entire Congress onward towards struggle? Would not the increasing preparedness for a successful struggle steel and stiffen our leadership?

Let us examine the policy and programme of the radical forces in our country in the light of these questions.

Amongst the leftists in our country there are four distinct groups. Their attitude on the question of an immediate struggle for Indian independence is not identical. On this important question there is a sharp division of opinion.

ROY'S POSITION

Comrade M.N. Roy thinks that it would be inadvisable to embark upon the struggle without adequate and effective preparation. It is argued that the present leadership is incapable of waging a relentless struggle. Compromise is the essence of Gandhism and any struggle conducted according to the Gandhian technique of *satyagraha* will not yield fruitful results. It can only end in a compromise. The Gandhian technique is defective and incomplete and we cannot reach our objective of complete independence by adhering to that technique. Congress committees are not properly organised and sufficiently politically developed to* become effec-

* The above article was written at the time of the annual conference of the Indian National Congress at Ramgarh, Bihar in March, 1940.

tive organs of our anti-imperialistic struggle. We should, therefore, not bother about an immediate struggle but engage ourselves in activities calculated to transform the Congress organisation into a fit instrument of revolutionary struggle. Adequate preparations on a vast scale and for a sufficiently long time will be needed to accomplish this preliminary task. Our task is, therefore, two-fold:

In the first place, we are asked to bend all our energies towards exposing the present leadership and showing up the hollowness of the Gandhian technique. Congressmen are called upon to strive for alternative leadership. Unless the present leadership is dethroned, the main task before the nation will remain unachieved.

Secondly, we are recommended a technique of struggle and a scheme of activity which, if carried out, will prepare the country for the coming struggle. The technique, however, is not the special property of Comrade Roy. It is the common property of all socialists.

In the present circumstances, Roy's programme cannot be officially adopted by the Congress and as such the responsibility for introducing the new technique devolves on such elements in the Left as agree with it. Roy wishes to create conditions that will facilitate this task. This is why he opposed the withdrawal of Congress Ministeries from provincial administrations. He felt that the suspension of the Constitution would lead to the curtailment of civil liberties.

For this very reason, he urged the President of the Congress in a letter in September to offer help to the Allies against Nazi Germany, if the British Government agreed to amend the Constitution so as to secure larger powers for provincial governments, adult franchise and full rights of citizenship for the people of the States.

COMMUNIST STAND

While Roy, like the Congress Socialists, regards the Congress as a revolutionary democratic movement and, therefore, considers Congress Committees to be organs of our struggle for national independence, the Communists characterise the Congress as a mass organisation of the Indian bourgeoisie. According to them its leadership, both organisational and ideological, has always been bourgeois in character and its programme and policies have served bourgeois interests. This is why in their opinion Gandhism is the right wing and 'left reformism' the left wing of the bourgeois ideology. This is why at one time they called the CSP a 'left manoeuvre bearing the socialist label'. With this conception of the Congress, they naturally tried to form an independent platform, supported by an independent organisation, embodying the united anti-Imperialist front. This independent organisation must come out in opposition to the

Congress. It must consistently criticise the national reformist bodies and organisations, and expose their true role before the masses.

The communists must try to isolate the leadership and the 'national reformist organisation' (meaning the Congress) from the toiling masses. *Kisan Sabhas* must be formed to fight Congress influence among *Kisans*. The tactics of a united front was described as "the most effective method of mobilising the masses for the economic and political struggle and for freeing the masses from the influence of the National Congress and its agencies". The Congress must be joined because it provided legal possibilities to an illegal organisation for weaning away honest revolutionary elements in the Congress from bourgeois leadership and for building up a fighting front.

It is certainly true that the Seventh World Congress gave a new tactical orientation to the Communist International and decided to apply the united front tactics in a new way. It was because of this change that Dutt and Bradley of the British Communist Party, in January 1936, wrote their famous thesis known as the "Anti-Imperialist People's Front in India", in which they advocate the application of united front tactics in quite a new form and called upon the Indian communists "to build the broadest possible front of all the anti-imperialist forces in the country on the basis of the Indian National Congress and support and strengthen it to this end." This was of course a healthy attitude and the thesis was endorsed by the Indian Communist Party in 1937.

Since then the Indian communists are talking of the unity in the Congress. But in the period of war and revolutionary crisis their policy has changed again, and they seem to have gone back to their old position. The leadership is being attacked and efforts are made to 'expose and isolate it': "not the policy of inducing and pushing the policy of Gandhian leadership into struggle but of isolating that leadership and smashing its mass influence." Public exposure of that leadership is said to be the immediate task before the communists for building the fighting front of the people. This is called 'united front from below', *i.e.*, unity with the rank and file as against the leaders. But it should be plain to the meanest understanding that it is impossible to call the Congress-minded masses to a common struggle without the co-operation of those to whom they give their confidence and look up for guidance.

In short, they aspire today to acquire influence over the masses in the fold of the Congress by attacking the present leadership and trying to undermine its influence. They seem to stand for an immediate struggle, but, in effect, they produce disorganisation in the forces of the struggle. Because they do not believe that the present leadership is or can be at least objectively revolutionary, they are attempting to create new organs of

struggle outside the Congress and very often in rivalry with it. But so far they have not met with any success and, therefore, the confusion that they have created is also limited in its scope.

They cannot go on claiming that they stand for an immediate struggle, while they believe in such policies and pursue such tactics, for the simple reason that very few Congressmen and their followers will agree to accept them as comrades in the struggle. Their main difference with Roy and his followers consists in their approach towards the Congress and the question of the leadership of the national movement. Roy and his followers believe in developing the Congress into the organ of an anti-imperialist struggle and do not advocate the leadership of the working class at this stage, while Communists do not believe in the former and vigorously stand for the latter.

BOSE'S ATTITUDE

It is difficult to grasp the theory that underlies the activities of Shree Subhas Chandra Bose. He talks of an immediate struggle and does all that lies in his power to make it difficult. He goes about attacking the present leadership of the Congress, declaring that it does not want a struggle, and accuses it of consciously working for a compromise.

If one were to believe him, the greater obstacle today is the present leadership of the Congress and not British Imperialism. He openly talks of two Congresses and of fighting this leadership with a new *Swarajist* programme. The methods he is pursuing will not stop compromise but create conditions favourable to it. By making the starting of the struggle difficult, he is helping to create conditions that will embolden our enemies and strengthen the hands of the elements that are hankering for compromise in the Congress.

THE CORRECT APPROACH

It is this question of approach to the Congress and the coming struggle that constitutes the main difference between the various groups among the Left. Congress Socialists believe—Roy and his followers agree with us there,—that ultimately by a process of transformation the Congress can become a fit instrument for the achievement of our objective. This does not mean that we completely exclude the possibility of the Congress going astray. If this happens, the Congress will have exhausted its possibilities and new organs of struggle will have to be created for carrying on the fight.

But we have very good reasons for believing that if we continue to work on correct lines, we will be able to keep the Congress on the straight path

and develop it for effective action. Communists have never really believed in this. That is why they can be neutral today on the question of the Anti-Compromise Conference. It is astounding that the communists should remain neutral on a question of such vital importance. The pre-eminence and unity of the Congress is not so important to them.

SOCIALIST'S ATTITUDE

This difference between us becomes very clear. For instance, when the problem of discipline in the Congress is involved, the Congress Socialists have, irrespective of their opinions, stood by the Congress on such occasions. Our attitude towards the Congress and the struggle explains our position in regard to the Anti-Compromise Conference and to every other move that tends to weaken or split the Congress. We believe that there are rich possibilities in the Congress. The Congress today wields enormous influence both at home and abroad and though we may differ from its official policies and acts, it would be the height of folly to think of breaking it up.

The Congress symbolises Indian unity and democracy. It is the only solid anchor of our hopes and aspirations in an otherwise troubled state of affairs. Fascist tendencies have begun to raise their heads and dangerous doctrines of national disunity and disintegration are being preached all round. Communalism is on the upward grade. Reactionary forces are trying to form a powerful combination in alliance with British Imperialism to crush the forces of progress and freedom. They are making the Congress and the national leadership their target. It is foolish to imagine that they are only opposed to the present High Command and would gladly join the Congress under a new dispensation. These factors impose a special obligation on us to see that nothing is done that may tend to weaken or disintegrate the Congress. A high sense of loyalty is demanded of us at present juncture.

THE DYNAMICS OF STRUGGLE

It is easy to understand the great emphasis Roy lays on change of leadership. But he seems, somehow to disregard the fact that struggle is a very effective instrument for changing the leadership. The pressure for struggle releases forces that move and metamorphose the leadership. New leadership is created in the course of the struggle. A mass struggle always throws up new leaders of the masses. It is only by showing qualities of leadership, by leading the masses from victory to victory, that one can win their confidence and achieve a place in the national leadership. Golden opportunities for growth are provided by a struggle.

The new technique of struggle can also be tried in however limited a field. And if it proves effective and compares favourably with the old technique and impresses people, it becomes a powerful instrument for changing the leadership. Past experience tells us that the process of radicalisation of the Congress is speeded up whenever the Congress launches a mass struggle. The rank and file is provided with rich experience in course of the struggle. It sees the technique in operation and realises its inadequacy and partial ineffectiveness. In a dynamic situation this process is accelerated. Whatever the technique of struggle, the experiences and results of a struggle are always healthy and beneficial to the movement.

In this belief and on the basis of these experiences, Congress Socialists have urged the Congress throughout to prepare for a struggle. The people want a struggle. In the context of war such a desire has become overpowering and irresistible. The policy of war-resistance was reiterated at every Congress, beginning with the Lucknow session. It has created this urge of struggle among the people. The entire Left shares the responsibility jointly for taking these repeated decisions. And when the moment has come for implementing these decisions, it would be wrong for us to change the front and advise postponement of the struggle until the conclusion of the war.

The reasons assigned by Roy for this change of policy existed at the time the decisions were taken. We cannot say that we had no certain knowledge of the conditions that persist today. Nobody could have hoped for a radical change in the leadership of the Congress in such a short time. It is bad leadership to bring the issue of war resistance to the foreground and to become indifferent to the demand for struggle which follows from it.

Besides, in our view in the existing circumstances a settlement between the British Government and the Congress is not easy. The Congress, even as it is today cannot be satisfied with another instalment of reforms and a promise of conferment of *Dominion Status* at an unspecified date. Nor is the British Government prepared to part with power to any substantial extent. Thus, a compromise seems difficult today. Repression is going on in right earnest. As things are, no ultimate escape from the struggle seems possible.

Even on the assumptions of Roy we ought to be prepared for struggle. Roy had urged the President of the Congress to enter into negotiations with the British Government on certain terms. Let us suppose his advise had been followed and the demands as formulated by him had been presented to the British Government, and further suppose that these demands had been rejected, what should the Congress have done in those circumstances? A struggle would have become inevitable.

It is strange that Roy should have failed to provide for this contingency. It may be said in reply that the terms suggested were so reasonable and moderate that the British Government could not have rejected them. But it is folly to rely on the sweet reasonableness of one's opponents. There is such a thing as the enemy forcing a fight on us. Wise leadership, would, therefore, prepare for a fight while it negotiates with the enemy. The only sound policy, therefore, is to prepare the country for a struggle and to move the whole Congress onward to a struggle.

A very necessary part of this policy is to create a suitable atmosphere for it. Internal conflict and controversy should be ended and appeals for unity and discipline in our ranks should resound in the country. This is the path of success. Any other course would be detrimental to the cause we hold dear. The alternative is disunity, demoralisation and defeat.

Let Congressmen, at least, close their ranks and present a solid phalanx to the enemy, to enable a united nation to meet this challenge to our manhood. Repression is in full swing. If we do not begin the struggle, it will be forced on us. At such a critical moment in the history of the Congress let there be no divided counsels. We must speak with one voice and prepare to fight shoulder to shoulder.

If we wish to move the entire Congress towards a struggle, we cannot carry on a crusade against its leaders, suggesting that they want to avoid a struggle at all costs and accusing them of wanting to compromise with British Imperialism in disregard of the principles of the Congress. This is just the way to sabotage a struggle. When the country is asked not to trust even the explicit declarations of the Working Committee, we cannot expect people to take the necessary preparations for struggle seriously. Nothing on the part of the members of the Working Committee entitles us to insinuate that they are men of dishonour. Such a propaganda defeats its own purpose.

This is our grievance against Subhas Chandra Bose. We had trusted that he would not try to break the integrity of the Congress. The passionate appeal for unity that he made at the outbreak of the war is still ringing in our ears. He opposed in the past the present leadership but worked against the Congress itself. A great change has come over him since. He seems to be bent upon splitting the Congress now.

He wants the present Congress to be converted into a Rightist Congress out and out and asks Leftists to leave the Congress and help him in creating a new Congress of Leftists. He seems to have taken a dangerous turning on the road to independence.

Subhas Chandra Bose has not always stood out against compromise like this. During his presidentship he was for negotiation with the British Government over the issue of the war. Today, he asserts that the

Constituent Assembly can only be convened after the conquest of power.

But he conveniently forgets what he wrote in his organ, the *Forward Bloc*, on September 9, under the caption "Lead From Wardha." He says there that the "Congress must press the national demand on the Government and insist on its immediate fulfilment." In the same article he proceeds to observe: "Let not our leaders who are now deliberating at Wardha ask for a whit less than, what is our inherent birthright. If they are called on to negotiate, let them do so honourably."

A year back at the Malda Divisional Conference and the Bengal Provincial Conference held at Jalpaiguri, Bose framed a resolution which foreshadowed the possibility of the Government conceding the demand of the Congress, in which event a Constituent Assembly was to be convoked for framing a constitution to be embodied in a treaty of alliance between India and Great Britain. This, according to him, could happen very well without recourse to a struggle. How can he now condemn Gandhiji for meeting the Viceroy or negotiating with him?

It is said, however, that such things appeal to the average Leftist. He has been fed upon slogans and his political education has been neglected. He is politically immature. He acts, therefore, as an unwise ally. Proper schooling of political workers and young men is the greatest need.

Insidious propaganda of a false and vicious kind is being carried on particularly against Congress Socialists. We have been described as Mensheviks. We are said to have surrendered to Gandhiji and the High Command. Our appeal to the people to join the struggle under the leadership of Gandhiji has been deliberately misinterpreted to mean abject surrender to Gandhism.

Well, we shall not defend ourselves. Our actions, past and present, will defend us. The line we have adopted does not mean that we have accepted the Gandhian philosophy of life or that we have come to regard the Gandhian technique as adequate or effective. We have again and again pointed out the inadequacy and partial ineffectiveness of the Gandhian technique of struggle and have put forward programmes to supplement it. It is a hard fact that today no struggle will have a nation-wide character and attract the attention of the world unless Gandhiji associates himself with it. This may provide a sad commentary on the state of our political advancement, nevertheless we cannot afford to ignore it. Today, we want a powerful mass movement and unless Gandhiji gives the call, the masses and the classes will not be drawn into it in large numbers. So it is no use asking the Congress to start the struggle ignoring Gandhiji or threaten to start an independent struggle on behalf of a section, if the Congress delays the call.

Our task is to move the entire Congress. This can be achieved only if we

work for unity in the Congress, accept its democratic decisions and observe its discipline. We should keep our heads cool and make the best of the situation. Above all, we must not succumb to the temptation of cheap popularity.

Revolutionary courage demands the capacity to withstand popular clamour now and then. Disruptive activities, from whatever quarter they may come, must be vigorously combated even at the risk of unpopularity. True leadership and opportunism go ill together..National unity must be our watchword. And our decisions and activities must be characterised by sobriety, a scrupulous regard for truth and a supreme desire to serve the best interest of the country.

*The War: Imperialist or People's?**

The party has always condemned wars between peoples as barbarous. But its attitude towards war differs in principle from that of pacifists and believers in absolute non-violence. The party's opposition to war is based fundamentally on political grounds. We realise that wars are inevitable in a society based on exploitation and therefore we recognise the impossibility of eliminating wars without eliminating the root causes of rivalries and conflicts and without establishing Socialism. We further recognise the justice and progressive character of certain wars, i.e., wars of national liberation conducted by an oppressed people against their oppressors, serfs against landowners, the proletariat against the bourgeoisie.

In such wars socialists will always sympathise with the oppressed people struggling to cast off the foreign yoke and the proletariat struggling to overthrow the capitalist rule of the bourgeoisie. In an epoch when capitalism was still progressive and was destroying feudalism and absolutism, socialists could very well sympathise with that bourgeoisie which helped in the accomplishment of this task notwithstanding the fact that they also conquered foreign lands. The fundamental historic significance of such wars did not alter by these acts of injustice and pillage on the part of the bourgeoisie. Such an epoch was opened by the French Revolution and the period between 1789 and 1871 (Paris Commune) was characterised by many wars which bore such a progressive character. These were national wars waged against foreign domination and the general tendency of the wars of this period was to weaken and destroy absolutism and feudalism. This historic task was performed by the bourgeoisie which opened the perspective for the development of a proletarian struggle for socialism.

But we are living today in an imperialist epoch. Capitalism has exhausted its progressive character and has become a reactionary force. It has become a fetter on the forces of production. Imperialism is the highest stage in the development of capitalism. Free trade and competition have

*The above article is taken from his book "National Movement and Socialism".

been developed to such an extent that they can no longer be held within the capitalist framework. Humanity must either pass over to Socialism or witness recurrent wars among capitalist nations for the preservation of capitalist economy and the bourgeois rule.

Such an epoch was reached in the 20th century. The war of 1914-18 was an imperialist war waged to serve imperialist ends. War is "politics continued by other (i.e., forcible) means." The world war of 1914-18 simply continued the imperialist policy of colonial robbery, oppression of foreign nations and suppression of labour movements.

The present war is of the same character. The epoch of imperialism has not ended notwithstanding the fact that there has come into existence as a result of the last war a state which claims to be socialist. The dominant economy of the world continues to be capitalist. When the war broke out in September 1939, its imperialistic character was generally recognised. The national units or the Communist Parties took up a straight "anti-war" position. They said in effect, "This is an imperialist war." In an imperialist war "the enemy is in your own country." From the point of view of the working class, there is nothing to choose between rival ruling classes: and therefore, the working class in each country has the sole duty of attacking its own ruling class in order to end the war by the defeat of all ruling classes and by an international socialist revolution. To the argument that British capitalism is less bad than German fascism the *Daily Worker* (the Communist daily in England) of April 26th, 1940, replied as follows:

"In reply to those who said 'fight for the Russian capitalist because otherwise you will fall under the heel of the German capitalist' Lenin said: The alternative is false, choose neither, but unite your forces and establish the power of the people."

That was over twenty-two years ago. In 1940, Communists did not draw any difference between parliamentary democracy and fascism in determining the nature of the war. Victor Gollancz, however, advanced the view that the rise of fascism was a new factor which should be taken into account and that the slogans of 1914-18 did not apply to the present war, which was an anti-fascist war. This was also the view of the Communist parties before the signing of the German-Soviet Pact. In an Open Letter which he addressed to the Communists, entitled "Where are you going?" Gollancz pointed out to his erstwhile co-workers:— "nor was there the slightest suggestion, either that we should give way to Hitler if the U.S.S.R. was not by our side? or that we should refuse to fight behind the Tories. On the contrary the cry 'Chamberlain would not stand up to Hitler: and something more than a shy glance was turned, now towards Eden, now

towards Winston Churchill, now towards Duff Cooper, precisely in the belief that they WOULD.' Indeed, as time went on, it was to the Tories that our appeal (rather than mine) was more and more directly made."

On the basis of what the Communists used to say in the Popular Front days about the danger of Hitler-Fascism, Victor Gollancz appealed to them to reconsider their new anti-war position and at least to refrain from doing anything which might give a pro-Nazi impression. He specially pointed out to them that all the Communist parties were not consistently following the "anti-war" line, that while British and French Communists were telling the British and French people that "the main enemy is at home" (the Allies) for German Communists "the main enemy is abroad" (the Allies). He made a reference in this connection to an article published in *Die Welt* (an official C.P. paper) of Feb. 2, 1940 by Walter Ulbricht, a member of the Central Committee of the German party, in which the following sentence occurs:

"This war policy (namely, support of the Allies) is the more criminal because . . . (Great Britain) . . . is the reactionary force in the world."

Ulbricht does not tell the German Communists that the enemy is at home. There is no appeal to the German people to rise up and overthrow the regime by revolutionary action (and lest it should be thought that this may be due to difficulties of publication, it must be remembered that *DIE WELT* is published in Sweden). On the contrary, he tells them that Great Britain "is the most reactionary force in the world." The *Daily Worker* (February 1, 1940) also threw all the blame on Britain and gave the impression that Hitler was after all reasonable enough and that all the trouble was due solely to the wickedness of Chamberlain and Reynaud. The following extract from the *Daily Worker* is interesting:

"Hitler repeated once again his claim that the war was thrust upon him by Britain. Against this historical fact there is no reply. Britain declared war, not Germany. Attempts were made to end the war, but the Soviet-German peace overtures were rejected by Britain. All through these months the British and French Governments have had the power to end the War. They have chosen to extend it."

This new trend in the Communist policy and their rank opportunism can be explained only on the basis that Soviet Russia was anxious to keep out of a major war and that it had secured this aim for the moment by the conclusion of the German-Soviet Pact. It was, therefore, necessary for Communists to do nothing which might jeopardise the pact. They could not

therefore afford to be consistent in the application of their tactics. It is also certain that if the Pact had not been concluded, the war would have been described as an anti-fascist war, and an appeal would have been issued to the workers of the world to be on the side of the Allies. We shall deal fully with the main shifts in the Communist policy towards the war at its proper place.

Suffice it to say for the present that after the date of the German-Soviet Pact the Communists found themselves free to take an "anti-war" line. Mr. Gollancz, however, pursued the old line of supporting the bourgeois Government as against Hitler and thus saving western Democracy and civilisation from destruction. In support of his plea he appealed to Marx, who, although a German, had supported Germany in the Franco-Prussian war (1870-1871). Others quote Marx and Engels, who, while denouncing wars, always sided with one or the other of the belligerent Governments, once the war had actually broken out, as was the case in 1854-1855, 1870-1871 and 1876-77. It is pointed out that Marx persistently egged on the British ruling class to make war on Russia, because he believed that the extension of the power of the Czarist regime would endanger the growth of the working class movements in Europe.

It is dangerous to base one's action on analogies of the past epoch. Old formulae lose their validity by change of circumstances. In Marx's time the bourgeoisie had not yet ceased to be progressive. In the last century the qualitative difference between a capitalist state and a feudal autocratic state was very great. Capitalism was performing the historic task of destroying absolutism and feudalism and constituting the national state. Besides, the proletariat had not yet appeared everywhere as an independent political force and wherever it had emerged in view, it had not yet become powerful enough to lead other plebian classes.

All these references were cited in 1914 also by social-chauvinists in support of their attitude of defending their distortion of Marx's and Engels' views. Lenin proceeded to reply to them as follows:

"The war of 1870-1871 was historically progressive on Germany's side upto the defeat of Napoleon III, because both he and the Tsar had long oppressed Germany, keeping it in a state of feudal decentralisation. As soon as the war turned into a plunder of France (annexation of Alsace and Lorraine) Marx and Engels decisively condemned the Germans. Even at the beginning of the war of 1870-1871 Marx and Engels approved of Bebel's and Liebknecht's refusal to vote for the military appropriations, they advised the Social Democrats not to merge with the bourgeoisie, but to defend the independent class interests of the proletariat. To apply the characterisation of the Franco-Prussian War, which was of a bourgeois progressive nature and fought for national liberty, to the present imperia-

list war is to mock at history. "The same is even more true about the war of 1854-55 and all other wars of the 19th century, i.e., A TIME WHEN THERE WAS NO MODERN IMPERIALISM, NO RIPE OBJECTIVE CONDITIONS FOR SOCIALISM, NO MASS SOCIALIST PARTIES IN ALL THE BELLIGERENT COUNTRIES, i.e., when there were none of those conditions from which the Basle Manifesto deduced the tactics of a 'proletarian revolution' in the case of a war's arising among the great nations."

"Whoever refers at present to Marx's attitude towards the wars of a period when the bourgeoisie was PROGRESSIVE forgetting Marx's and Engels' words that 'the workers have no fatherland,' which refer to A PERIOD WHEN THE BOURGEOISIE IS REACTIONARY AND HAS OUTLIVED ITSELF, TO THE PERIOD OF SOCIALIST REVOLUTIONS, is shamelessly distorting Marx and substituting a bourgeois for a socialist standpoint." (*Collected Works of Lenin, Vol. XVIII, "The Imperialist War, page 22).*

The German-Soviet pact had worked well hardly for a year when Hitler decided to extinguish it. The Russian invasion by Hitler brought Soviet Russia on the side of the Allies. The Communist Party of India, however, did not consider this fact to be sufficient to alter the character of the war and continued to support the thesis of active opposition to war. They were of course perturbed at the news and in their naivete believed for many months that Churchill was instrumental in provoking Hitler to declare war against Russia. But the Communist Party of India is not its own master. It is tied to the chariot wheel of the Third International through the British Communist Party, which is ruled by the Russian Communists who are guided in their formulation of their policies solely by the requirements of Russia's foreign policy. It received the mandate from abroad to offer unconditional support to Britain and USA in their war efforts as Russia's presence on the side of the Allies had changed the character of the war.

The war had now become anti-fascist and it was the duty of the working class to support the Allies. The Communist Party quickly obeyed the mandate and has produced a new thesis in which it advocates a policy of unconditional support to Allies on the alleged ground that the war has ceased to be imperialist and has become a people's war. It is sad to reflect that the Communist parties have proved disloyal to their convictions and tasks. The very purpose for which the Third International was brought into being by Lenin has been defeated. The Third International has failed. No one can play hide and seek with history. The crisis engendered by war has torn the mask from off its face and revealed it in its true colours.

We shall examine in detail the new Communist thesis and shall try to explain the historical causes which have led the world Communists to

abjure their convictions in a moment of crisis and to betray the cause of revolutionary socialism. However unpleasant the task may be, it has to be performed in a conscientious manner in the interests of truth.

Communists admit that the present is an imperialist epoch. It was only till yesterday that they used to characterise the war as imperialist. According to them, it is Russia's entry into the war on the side of the Allies which has altered its character. They now say that an anti-fascist war has become a people's war. They have, however, to admit reluctantly that in India it has not become a people's war but then add that it is the duty of the people to make it so and that it lies in their power to change it into a people's war. They pin their hope on dialectics which, they say, will perform the trick.

Every individual war has to be studied separately and with reference to the historic background in which it arises. Marxism does not ask who declares a war but in what complex of circumstances a war takes place. The present war is an outcome of "capitalist imperialism" and "of the policy of conquest" pursued by both the groups of belligerent nations. War is a continuation of policy of politics through other (i.e., forcible) means. As a matter of fact, war started years ago and September, 1939 was only an extension of it. The nature of the war has to be determined with reference to the basic policies and objectives of the principal combatants. The principal combatants in this contest are England and USA, on the one side and Germany, Italy and Japan, on the other. They are all imperialists. The first group consists of satiated nations while the others lagged behind in the race for the partition of the world and is accordingly unsatiated. While the first group fights for retaining its empire, the other for enlarging its territories. The present war is being fought for repartitioning the world in accordance with the new relationship of imperialist forces. The mere fact that Russia has become a victim of German aggression will not change the character of the war. It would be true to say that Russia has no other aim but to defend itself against Nazi aggression. It had therefore to acquiesce in the Atlantic Charter which has only a limited application and which does not rest on principles on the basis of which alone a just and an enduring peace can be secured. Stalin has also made it clear that Russia is fighting a nationalist war for the defence of the Fatherland. Obviously, he does not want to frighten the bourgeoisie of the allied nations and their Governments and for this very reason he has to put aside those ideals which should guide the actions of socialists in settling international relations. The alliance of Russia with England has not changed a bit the war and peace aims of England and still Stalin recommends England and America as defenders and liberators of Asia. The truth of the matter is that each one of the allies is fighting to safeguard its own national interests.

④ A modern war between the great powers does not signify a conflict between democracy and fascism but a struggle of two imperialisms for the redivision of the world. All attempts to represent the present war as a clash between ideas of democracy and fascism belong to the realm of charlatanism or stupidity. Political forms change but capitalist appetites remain. The war continues to be a war against Germany. It has not become a war against fascism. As such imperialist democracy cannot be expected to kill its blood brother which is fascism. The present war does not aim at the destruction of imperialism and, therefore, cannot lead to the destruction of fascism which is its child. So long as imperialism flourishes fascist reaction will flourish. In times of wars, these capitalist democracies will tend more and more towards fascism. The exigencies of a war will imprint upon them a military outlook and will make them more totalitarian. It is said that since in peace time we repel fascism's encroachment upon democracy, we should be equally prepared to support democracies in their war against fascist governments. But it is forgotten that we defend democracies by means of our own organisations. We do not entrust this defence to the bourgeois State. The imperialist war primarily raises the question of the fate of capitalism before the bourgeoisie of every national state.

Much stress is laid on the fact that all the fascist states are in one camp. That is hardly an accurate generalisation. The Axis States are the unsatiated nations which are vitally interested in the repartitioning of the world. They could not hope to succeed in their plans if they had not combined with each other. Their enmity is chiefly directed against the great democracies because it is they who are keeping them suppressed. But just as there is a split in the world of imperialism, there would be nothing unusual in a split among fascist powers. Who does not know that Italian and German interests are in direct conflict in central Europe and in the Balkans? Who does not also know that they conducted war to the death in Austria throughout 1934 and 1935? The anti-communism of anti-comintern Powers is a camouflage for aims of aggression. States are guided by self-interest and not by ideological considerations in arranging political alliances. Parliamentary democracies are only too glad to welcome fascist or semi-fascist military dictatorship to fight against Hitler. After all, was not Poland a semi-fascist state whose integrity was guaranteed by England and France and for whose sake they went to war? Is not Greece in the camp of democracies? Greece was ruled by General Metaxas who established a dictatorship in 1936 and became a premier for life in 1938. It is not that the democracies shunned fascist states and treated them as pariahs. On the contrary, they wooed and courted them and tried to win them over to their side (as in the case of Franco-Spain). But Hitler's success enticed them away.

Again much capital is made of the fact that England is on the side of the Soviet Union and on this ground it is asserted that it is not possible now to describe the war as an imperialist war. This argument has as much merit or demerit as the assertion that because the Soviet Union is on the side of imperialist England in this war, it is impossible to describe it as a proletarian war.

In no sense can the present war be regarded as a people's war. The war in the main continues to be an imperialist war. If there is a war for national liberation conducted by the subject people against the slave owner or where people rise in revolt against the bourgeoisie and their national government, acting on the slogan "turn the imperialist war into a civil war," there we have the people's war. But where the State is merely backed by large sections of its nationals in its war policies, there it cannot be said that the war has become a people's war. The rallying of the masses to the government is one thing and the rallying of a government to the masses is another. According to this view, England's war against Germany should be regarded to have been a people's war ever since Churchill became the Prime Minister of England.

We all know how difficult it is even for the well-organised proletarian parties to act on the slogan "turn the imperialist war into a civil war". National Chauvinism is strong in capitalist countries and the proletariat is also swept away by its wave at critical times. Workers generally lined up behind the governments during the last war as well as the present one.

The government of today is being supported by the vast masses of the peoples. It would be wrong to suppose that Hitler is not supported by the German people. The people are being duped by their rulers and have fallen an easy prey to a war hysteria. So, the mere fact that the people of a particular country are supporting for the moment their governments in their war efforts will not make the war a people's war and as such just and progressive.

Japan has been fighting China for the last several years unofficially though the formal declaration of war has been made quite recently. Great Britain and USA have also been helping China with big war loans and war materials for sometime past without a formal declaration of hostilities against Japan. The situation has not altered in essence by formalising the proceedings. Russia and Japan are still not fighting each other. China's war is the people's war against foreign aggression but its recent formal alliance with England and USA will not change the character of the war when viewed as a whole. If that had been so the present war should at no stage have been regarded as Imperialist.

A genuine people's war should lead to the destruction of booty: Imperialism of Capitalist Democracy and of Fascism. But he will indeed be

a bold man who would say that the present war is being fought to destroy imperialism. That would mean that the British and the American Governments are waging war to destroy themselves.

A similar argument was advanced by Social Democrats at the time of the last war who pointed out that there was a national element in the war as represented by the war of Serbia against Austria. Lenin exposed their sophistry and replied as follows:

“Only in Serbia and among the Serfs do we find a national movement for freedom, a movement of long standing embracing millions of ‘National Masses’ and of which the present war of Serbia against Austria is a ‘Continuation’. Were this war isolated, that is not connected with the general European war with the Selfish and predatory aims of England, Russia etc. then all socialists would be obliged to wish success to the Serbian bourgeoisie that is the only correct and absolutely necessary conclusion to be drawn from National Element in the present war. The national element of the Serbo-Austrian war has no significance and can have none, in the general European war.”

It may be said that it is our duty to consider everything from the point of view of the interests of the Soviet Union which is just now ranged on the side of the Allies fighting in self-defence against Hitler and that it becomes the duty of the world proletariat to line up behind the allied governments. It would be wrong to view the whole question solely from one point of view, however important that point of view may be. Marxist dialectics teach us to grasp the reality in its entirety and complexity. It is a lying propaganda to say that the present war is being fought by any side for freedom and democracy. The satiated powers want to maintain the *status quo* and preserve their capitalist class interests. Do we not see before our very eyes that civil liberties are being curtailed, that people are being over-burdened with taxation and urged to sacrifice themselves for the bourgeoisie? Is it also not a fact that India, Egypt and the African colonies are still being held in subjection?

It is also said that the New World Order based on justice, freedom and equality will be the direct outcome of the present war. Such a hope is entertained because of the false belief that Russia and China will have the determining voice at the peace conference. This is an illusion which we should get rid of. Peace in the event of an Allied victory will be largely dictated by the USA this time. It is wrong to say that England and America are virtual prisoners in the hands of Stalin and that they are being made to do his job.

As England was the most powerful representative of capitalism in the

past and as such dictated peace in the last war, so USA being the most powerful representative of capitalism in the present epoch, will dictate peace this time. The likelihood is that the USA will get a free hand in the Pacific, while England will claim a free hand in other spheres. Of course, Russia's claim to restoration of her lost territories and to the improvement of the frontiers will be admitted. China's integrity will be restored, subject of course to the retention of Britain's and America's interest in that part of the world. This would be so because these countries have been largely financing China's war efforts in their self-interest. Even if Japanese Imperialism were to go British and American Imperialism will remain. Russia and China will not be permitted to interfere in the domestic affairs of their allies. Their economic dependence on the USA in the coming years would not allow them to take a more independent line.

But wars do engender revolutions. It is, however, difficult to predict whether they will take place in the course of the war or at its end. The probability is that there will be a series of revolutions after the war. The decisions of the war will not be final. They will be revised by mass revolutions. The historical development is reaching a stage when people will take a direct hand in the shaping of things. We have to prepare ourselves for that eventuality. Our work lies in that direction. We should awaken and develop the revolutionary spirit of the masses and prepare them for revolutionary actions.

The question is why the Third International has betrayed its convictions and tasks. There is no doubt that it has demonstrated its hollowness at a crucial moment in history and has failed to serve the purpose for which Great Lenin had created it. It is pertinent to ask why the Third International has met with such a dismal end. For this, it is necessary to briefly refer to its historical development. The central fact is that the Third International is subordinate to the national politics of Soviet Russia and that the Soviet bureaucracy under Stalin wanted to keep the Soviet Union out of a major war. All its foreign policies were directed to this end. It is with this view that the seventh World Congress (1935) decided to form united front tactics to fight war and fascism. The Third International wanted peace at any price. It knew quite well that if there was war in the world, the Soviet Union would be drawn into it with immense risk to itself. The proletarian parties of the world had, therefore, to strive for peace and the maintenance of the *status quo*. They evidently forgot that the interests of the Soviet Union could ultimately be protected only on the world scale by developing international revolutionary action, and not by pinning their faith on alliances with bourgeois States.

It was proper to keep out the war as long as possible. But it was fatal to rely on the broken reed of the League of Nations and collective security.

The League of Nations was characterised by Stalin as an association of imperialist bandits. Stalin said in 1927 that "The Soviet Union is not prepared to become a part of that camouflage for imperialist machinations represented by the League of Nations. The League is the rendezvous of the imperialist leaders who settle their business behind the scenes." But in 1934 when the Soviet Union itself joined the League the tone changed completely. The communists now began to draw a distinction between "aggressor" and "defender" Nations. This is what Stalin said on 10 March, 1939:

"The war is being waged by aggressor States which in every way infringe upon the interest of the non-aggressive States primarily in England, France and the USA."

Another version of the same distinction is that which they make between the "Peace-loving" imperialists. They called upon the League to punish the aggressor nations and to support the "peace-loving" capitalist nations. To draw such distinctions between two imperialist states in our epoch is a distortion of Marxism. Marxism does not judge the character of a war by answering the question as to who started the war. The truth of the matter is that satiated nations appeared to be peace loving because they do not want the *status quo* to be disturbed. They also distinguish the "Democratic" capitalist state from fascist state and on this ground stated that it was necessary to defend "Democratic" states from attacks by a fascist country. They also declared that a war fought between democratic-capitalist countries with their ally Soviet Russia, on one side, and Germany, on the other, would not be an imperialist war.

It is interesting to note that similar arguments were advanced by patriotic social democrats during the last World War who were for defending the fatherland and for supporting the national bourgeoisie. Scheidemann and Noske defended progressive Germany from Czarist barbarism while Guesde and Vaillant defended Republican France from autocratic Germany. They also advanced the argument "We have been attacked; we defend ourselves; the interests of the proletariat demand resistance to the disturbers of the European peace." The fallacy of these arguments was mercilessly exposed by Lenin. Lenin said that "This tune is repeated in the declarations of all the governments and in the declarations of all the bourgeois and the yellow press the world over."

The communists accordingly defended bourgeois democracy against fascism and began to establish the people's front, wherever possible, against fascism. If France had stuck to the Franco-Soviet Pact and England had agreed to conclude an alliance with the Soviet Union, Soviet

Russia would have been on the side of the allies in this war from the very beginning, and in that case the communist parties of the world would have been instructed to offer unconditional support to the allied governments. When before Munich it was thought that hostilities might soon break out, it began to be asked what would be the attitude of the Indian communists towards the war. It was taken for granted at that time that in the event of a war against Hitler, the Soviet Union would be on the side of England and France. It was suggested that in that case Indian communists would have to support the war. But our communist friends stoutly refuted the suggestion saying that the fact that Soviet Union was on the side of England and France would not change the Imperialist character of the war. Fortunately, for the Indian communists the alliance with England did not materialise, and Stalin successfully negotiated a non-aggression pact with Hitler who was anxious to avoid a "two front" war. The Indian communists were thus saved the necessity of supporting the war and could freely describe it as an imperialist war.

They were, besides, to do nothing which would jeopardise the Soviet-German Pact and they had, therefore, to instruct German communists to do nothing which might irritate Hitler and give him a pretext to terminate the pact. In their anxiety to preserve the pact, they had to humour Hitler and praise his efforts at peace. British imperialism had to be painted in its blackest colours and had to be held responsible for the outbreak of war. This was in clear contradiction to all that they used to say in "Popular Front" days. British imperialism was in those days considered to be a "lesser evil" when compared with fascism and was to be defended by the proletariat from attacks of fascist countries. The German-Soviet Pact, however, could not last long and Hitler at last decided to invade the Soviet Union. The Indian communists at that time did not think it necessary to change their attitude to war. They continued to regard it as imperialist notwithstanding Russia's entry into it on the side of the Allies. In support of this statement we would like to quote the following passage from the pamphlet entitled '*Soviet-German War*' published by *Politbureau* of the Communist Party of India, July 1941:-

"The Communist Party declares that the only way in which the Indian people can help in the just war which the Soviet is waging, is by fighting all the more vigorously for their own emancipation from the imperialist yoke. Our attitude towards the British Government and its imperialist war remains what it was. We must continue, nay, intensify our struggle against booty. There can be no change in our policy until a people's government, which unequivocally renounces imperialist aims in this war as well as in India and in the colonies, comes to power. We can

- **render really effective aid to the Soviet Union only as a free people. That is why our campaign for the demonstration of our support and solidarity with the Soviet Union must be coupled with the exposure of the imperialist hypocrisy of the Churchills and Roosevelts with the demand for the intensification of our struggle for Independence.”**

But as the war advanced, it began to be suggested in Communist circles that the character of the war had changed; that the defeat of USSR would not weaken but strengthen imperialism and that therefore they must co-operate with the government in their war-efforts without making any conditions. This line of thought was discussed in detail by CCC in one of its party letters dated 30 October, 1941 (*vol. I, no. 53*) and it came to the conclusion “that only in the measure the people gather the strength to assert themselves against imperialists and their rule, only in that measure will they be able to line up in the international peoples’ front for winning the war against fascism and for the Soviet people and the people of the world. Those who say: “Imperialists are rendering full help to the USSR forced by their own contradictions and all that the Indian people had to do is to help them”, are not advocating a peoples’ policy nor an internationalist policy. They are following an imperialist policy. They are echoing the imperialist lie. Reliance on the people, on the working class and not on the imperialists, this is the core of a truly internationalist policy. They are false internationalists and the deceivers of people who say that we can side with the Soviet or win the war for the people by aiding the British Government’s war efforts. The Indian communists had not been brought up in the atmosphere of people’s front tactics otherwise they would not have taken long to change the war thesis. India’s relationship with England also deterred them from giving up their attitude of opposition.

But at last the mandate came from abroad to support the war and they had to bow to it in spite of themselves. It became necessary for them now to sing a new song in support of their changed attitude. They began to say now that the war had become a people’s war and as such deserved their support.

The people’s front policy had prepared the world communists to support such a course of action in the event of an attack on Russia by Nazi Germany. The expression ‘People’s War’ has been used on purpose to cause confusion of thought. It really means war of democracies against fascist states but the words chosen to express this idea convey a wrong impression as if people are taking an initiative in conducting this war to secure their rights. The expression has come in vogue again ever since the ‘popular front’ days. About the nature of people’s front government, it was said that it was neither a bourgeois government nor a proletarian but a

‘people’s government’ which meant a coalition of anti-Nazi political parties. A war conducted against a fascist by anti-fascist elements—under whose leadership it did not matter (it may be bourgeois)—would be a people’s war. They, therefore, think that the war can be easily converted into a people’s war or a democratic war if governments are really anti-fascist governments and the test of this is that they are willing to become allies of the Soviet Union in this war.

In case of aggression, people would naturally be led to the defence of the fatherland against the aggressor and they would be inclined to support their government if it seriously wanted to fight the enemy. It is the task of the revolutionary socialists and communists to expose the imperialist character of the war to the people to awaken their revolutionary spirit. The communists have betrayed socialism and have distorted Marxism and dialectics to justify their unconditional support to this war. It is our revolutionary duty to expose those social-chauvinists who are exploiting the proletariat’s sympathy for the Soviet Union for enlisting their support in this imperialist war to the bourgeois governments of Allied nations which are struggling to safeguard their capitalist class interests.

The world is passing through a crisis. It is revealing every political party in its true character. It behoves us to affirm our principles once again and to adhere to them firmly in this moment of crisis.

*India and the post-War World**

The war has been won. The question is if the Allied Governments will be able to win peace. As has been remarked by shrewd observers, if peace has to be won, the foundation of principles on which peace has to be built should have been laid during the period of war itself. If we have to avoid the outbreak of another war, we must build an economic system which can offer progressive welfare for the masses. It is sufficient condemnation of the present system that full employment has been possible only during the war period. Without a fundamental change in the present system, democracy will be in a critical condition everywhere. We cannot go back to the *laissez faire* policy of the pre-war period. The society has to be planned for the well-being of the common man. In the words of Harold Laski, "even after a military victory over Nazim, still remains the deeper issue of a victory over ourselves."

PRINCIPLE AND EXPEDIENCY

Let us see if such a victory has been achieved. There is no doubt that Allied Governments have, from time to time, issued statements breathing lofty sentiments of the dignity of man and of a deep feeling for humanity. We have the noble expressions of the *Atlantic Charter* and of the *Four Freedoms*. The Charter adopted at the San Francisco Conference reaffirms faith in the equal rights of men and women and of nations, large and small, and stresses the necessity of living in unity and concord so that international peace may be secured. These are noble professions indeed. But we all know how the Allied Governments have belied them in practice. Power politics is very much in evidence and principles have given place to expediency. As the end of the war in Europe was in sight Churchill began to say that the war had ceased to be ideological. The rift between the Allies is widening and the pre-war suspicions are again raising their head. Unilateral decisions have been taken again and again.

*Amrit Bazar Patrika, Annual Puja Number, 1945.

IMPERIALIST POLICY REMAINS

In the world security plan that has been adopted by the United Nations, a Trusteeship Council has been instituted to administer mandated territories and territories annexed from enemy countries, only in case of individual agreements. But where no such agreement is possible, the Council will not be competent to undertake the administration of such territories. Besides, no machinery has been set up to supervise the administration of dependent territories administered by members of the United Nations and no compulsion can be used in their case to enforce the fulfilment of the aims and objectives, which such members recognise under the Charter. Again England, France and Holland are not prepared to relinquish their empires. Churchill's words "we mean to hold our own" still ring in our ears. The Labour Government has not returned Hong Kong to China. Bevin's foreign policy is only a continuation of Churchill's policy. The British regard their empire as necessary for their wealth and power. This tenacious desire to hold on to the old world will not establish peace and economic security in the world.

It is also clear that no organisation will be able to keep the peace if its principal members do not mean to do so. It is the leaders and policies that will determine the shape of the coming world and not the platitudes indulged in world charters.

It seems as if peace is already lost and this blood-bath has again been in vain. In such a situation, it behoves every true lover of freedom and democracy to educate public opinion on the implication of the present situation and to organise it for fighting the forces of reaction in order to bring back the lost peace. The next few years will be decisive and it behoves all the progressive forces of the world to unite together for achieving their common purpose. The masses are in an expectant mood and are ready to undergo heavy sacrifices only if they have the assurance that their sacrifices will not be in vain and will not be utilised to serve the interest of an already over-privileged class.

It is certain that if we acquiesce in what is happening today, all the evils that followed the last war will return. The issues are so deep and are so intimately connected with human welfare that we can ignore them only at our peril.

If the above view is correct, Asia will not have a happy time. We should recognise that though sympathy and help should be welcome from every quarter, we shall have primarily to depend upon ourselves. It seems that the obduracy and utter selfishness of the imperialist powers will make it inevitable for the subject countries of the East to combine for striking a blow for freedom.

AMERICA AND RUSSIA

The tendency exhibited during the war to count too much on the goodwill and support of the USA is to be deprecated. It seems as if in the days to come the USA would more and more refuse to interfere in the domestic affairs of the British Empire. The news that there is going to be an Anglo-American alliance as against the Soviet Power, if correct, simply confirms the truth of the above viewpoint.

It is becoming more and more difficult to predict how Russia will act in a particular situation. Russia has been a great inspiration to the oppressed people of the earth but the hard realities of the European situation, it seems, have led her to abandon much of her old idealism. She wants to make herself completely free from the menace of foreign invasion. Her policy seems to be dictated by this sole consideration. She does not obviously trust some of her present allies. She has not forgotten as to what had happened to her all these years ever since the Russian Revolution, encirclement by capitalist powers, intervention and economic blockade and their continuous refusal to enter into friendly relations with her. Russia is, therefore, taking all possible steps to prevent a repetition of such happenings. She is more afraid of her new allies than of her erstwhile enemy Germany.

Soviet Russia is interested in the Middle East, Iran and China. The British Government is trying to strengthen itself in the Middle East by establishing the Arab Federation under its leadership. It is giving the slogan of 'hands off Iran' and will give the Iranian Government its moral support against Russian interference. In China also, Anglo-American interests demand the establishment of a strong national government. China is the only Asiatic country that has got a permanent seat on the Security Council and its future will be assured with the support and goodwill of the Asiatic people.

SOVIET-CHINESE TREATY

In this connection it is gratifying to note that Russia has displayed good sense by entering into a fair treaty with China and by giving a guarantee that it has no intention of interfering in its internal affairs. India's future is closely interwoven with the future of China and as such, it will be our duty to stand with our great and true ally through thick and thin. It is now for the leaders of the *Kuomintang* to democratise their Government and to adopt radical measures to secure the well-being of the people. Let us hope that China's sympathy and help will be available to every Asiatic country that struggles for its freedom but we recognise that this will be possible only

within the strict limits of its obligations to other members of the United Nations.

ROLE OF INDIA

India alone will be unfettered by any such consideration but its subjection today will not enable it to render any substantial help to others. India has, however, become a symbol of the freedom of Asia. Let us see that the symbol is not broken.

Our stand during the war has made India the question mark of the present epoch and all countries of Asia are eagerly looking forward to the day when India will be free because they feel instinctively that the key of their salvation is in India. They are aware of the fact that our stand during the war has been a demand for the freedom of all Asiatic and African peoples. Let us hope that India, while striving for its own freedom, will not forget its neighbours who are less fortunate and will, at least for consideration of self-interest, if not for anything else, follow a good-neighbourly policy and will enter into unofficial non-aggression pacts, and pacts of mutual friendship to ensure their future freedom.

India should make her position clear in this respect by making a declaration to the effect that she has no intention to exploit her neighbours either politically or economically. She should never seek special privileges for, or claim discrimination in favour of, its nationals in Burma and Ceylon. She should advise Indians living abroad to identify themselves with the common people of those countries. India cannot follow a policy of isolation. Our isolationism has done us much harm in the past. Let us revive the ancient traditions when India had her contact with the surrounding world and when there was commerce in ideas and goods between India, Central Asia, China and the countries of South-East Asia.

Though England, France and Holland may want to retain their old empires in the East, they will find it more and more difficult to do so. The war has quickened the political consciousness of the Eastern peoples. They have got over their inferiority complex. The white man's prestige has been shaken to the utmost and cannot be any more retrieved. Burma, Malaya and Indo-China will not agree to return to the old position of subjection. If any such attempt is made, it will be strenuously resisted. India will not be alone in its struggle for freedom and democracy. India has a great role to play in Asia in the present epoch. But this will be possible only if we realise our responsibility and do not miss the great opportunities that will present themselves from time to time.

The August Resolution is our guiding star. It is a perfect resolution because it not only reiterates our determination to achieve our indepen-

dence but it also defines the social contents of the concept of freedom. It wants to vest all political power into the hands of workers in fields and factories. It also expresses India's readiness to accept her international obligations. We have only to see that the resolution is not put into cold storage but is carried out in practice.

Let us hope that we shall have the wisdom, the vision, the courage and the statesmanship so to shape our policies as may enable the whole of Asia to achieve its freedom and further to lay the true foundations of full democracy everywhere in the East. This is the positive purpose for which we have to fight and if we have the compulsive drive, we are bound to succeed.

*Britain Won't 'Quit**

The British are not going to part with power whether in India or elsewhere; the people will have to wage another struggle to wrest power and establish a socialist state in this country. Since the end of the World War II, a neo-Anglo-Saxon imperialism has been growing at an alarmingly fast pace. The Anglo-Saxon alliance and joint diplomacy has come into existence to counteract the growing strength of Soviet Russia and the socialist forces in the world. The old dollar imperialism is being turned into a territorial imperialism, as America has immensely gained in strength and material resources due to World War II.

Acharya Narendra Deva was speaking at the UP Congress Socialist Party Conference on the resolution. The resolution stated:

This conference of the Congress Socialist Party, therefore, hopes that the Congress would go ahead with the programme of framing a constitution for an independent, sovereign republic in India, trying to secure the largest amount of co-operation from all sections of the Indian people but not allowing itself to be deflected from this course by the non-co-operation of any particular section or element of the Indian people. It hopes that on re-assembly on the 20th of January, 1947, the Constituent Assembly would function as a sovereign body brooking no interference from any quarter, accept the resolution on objectives and the rules formed forthwith and to form a provisional Indian government, to fix a date by which all elements of British authority, including British troops, must be withdrawn from India and create the necessary conditions for the setting up of an independent, federal sovereign republic of India in its place.

This conference is fully convinced that the implementing of such a revolutionary struggle between the Indian people and Britain and calls upon the Indian people to undertake urgent preparations for the final struggle for power in India. In such a struggle the Indian people would not voluntarily surrender instruments of authority hitherto occupied by the

• Based on the speeches published in *National Herald*, January 15, and 17, 1947

British Government but employ them to resist British authority in India and attempt to paralyse and put out of action these centres of imperialist activity and power.

“The harnessing of men and resources for putting through such a plan of action should be our paramount duty at this juncture.”

“The revolution of 1942 has strengthened the revolutionary power of the people of India but the A.I.C.C.’s resolution of August B, 1942, demanding the immediate withdrawal of British power from India and the establishment of a united federal state in India in which power must essentially belong to the workers in fields and factories still remains unredeemed. The policy of negotiating with the British Government for transference of power pursued by the Congress ever since the release of the Congress Working Committee in 1945, culminating in the formation and reformation of the Interim Government, the convening of the Constituent Assembly and its adjournment under the shadow of the British Government’s statement of December 6, 1946, and the acceptance of that statement by the A.I.C.C. at Delhi on January 6, 1947, is not going to achieve the objective laid down in A.I.C.C. resolution of the 8th August, 1942. Recent events and circumstances have made it clear, if indeed it was not so before that, Britain does not intend to wind up its rule in India completely and immediately. Indeed Britain has been trying all along to hold on to India as long as possible and to create such conditions as would put off a complete and immediate transfer of power from Britain to India. The attitude of the British Government towards the Muslim League and the prices and the activities of the Viceroy and the Political Department bear no other interpretation. The military and strategic arrangements being made by the British Government in the Middle East for the protection of the route to the East and the alternative plan of developing Africa as a military and strategic base keeping in view the new conditions of warfare also emphasises the desire of Britain to hold on to India and its empire in the East.”

POST-WAR WORLD

It is essential to review world conditions to understand British intentions correctly. As a result of the war certain fascist powers like Germany, Japan and Italy, have tumbled down and among the victors, America’s power, economic as well as military, has considerably increased. Almost all other countries in the world today are indebted to her, and depend on her either for their food supply or for other vital needs. England is comparatively weak and has lost much of its former trade and depends for its very existence on the assistance she gets from the United States of America. The greatest rival of the British empire is the USA which has captured most of Britain’s former markets in the East as well as in the West.

The power of USSR had also tremendously increased, particularly in Europe, as a result of the last war. Economically Russia is weak and knows that she can overcome her difficulties with American support but she is afraid of accepting that support because she knows fully well that such economic help will have vital political repercussions. Europe is thus divided in two camps today. USSR on the one side and the Anglo-American bloc on the other, each trying to get the better of the other in the next world war.

Britain is indebted to India and other small members of the Commonwealth. Those small countries, like Canada, now no more looked towards Britain for their safety and defence or for their progress but are on the look-out for new friends. Canada is more inclined towards US, and is seeking her help for mutual benefit.

Things in the Middle-East are also not very palatable to the British and new problems have raised their heads. Britain is fully aware of its problems and that is the reason why she is most anxious to transfer the centre of activity and her military bases from that small island to Africa from where she can defend her interests with greater advantage in the event of another war. Britain is also eager to continue her hold over India mainly for that reason so that in case another war comes, she might depend on the resources of this country.

If it is not so, and if Britain is really anxious to grant India freedom why she is trying to strengthen her hold in the Middle-East? What need there is for the new strategy? If that is not so, why should Britain have created so many walls, the Muslim League, the Hindu Mahasabha and the princes, in the way of India's freedom? If that is not so, what is delaying the British from packing up and allowing the Constituent Assembly to go ahead and frame a constitution for the country even without reactionary elements?

Why the Cabinet mission has made provisions for groupings. They knew that if a reactionary government is established on the frontiers of India, they can always depend on its support in the event of a war with Russia.

The Constituent Assembly should act as a sovereign body and should go ahead with the formation of a constitution for the country whether the League comes in or not and whether the princes come in or keep out. If the British Government does not accept the constitution thus framed, the country should make it a major issue and fight it out. It is also the duty of the Constituent Assembly to fix a date for the British to withdraw.

The troubles in the countries of the Far-East and the Middle-East as also in China, are a direct result of the Anglo-Saxon diplomacy, and their bid to end progress of socialist forces. America is helping the Kuomintang for these reasons. The powers of the West for the same reason are conniving at the suppression of genuine freedom movements in Indonesia and Viet Nam.

The quarrels in the Middle-East are being manoeuvred by British diplomats. Knowing full well that British Isles can no more be kept safe against the latest weapons of war like atom bombs and rockets. England is trying her best to transfer her heavy industries to Africa, and build her potential war bases alongside the Mediterranean and in Africa. It is why England is reluctant on the question of granting freedom to the Sudan and is making frantic effort with Arab countries for friendship and fanning trouble in Palestine.

But the time has changed now and even imperialists have to change their phraseology, for they can no more speak in terms of colonialism. The imperialists, therefore, have agreed to give self-government to the subject countries, not that they are honest about it, but that they know that they can not carry on day-to-day administration in those countries because of opposition of the people. The imperialists, therefore, are trying to establish semi-people's governments in those places, after getting them to sign a treaty with them. The self-government in the subject nations, as envisaged by the imperialists, means only running of day-to-day administration with reservations in matters of foreign policy and military preparations.

NEO-IMPERIALISM

This neo-imperialism, however, would not last long. Soon scarcity owing to war may vanish, and there is every likelihood of an economic slump as occurred in 1931. This economic slump will bring about another world war for which Anglo-Saxon governments are making joint and feverish preparations. This war will obviously be waged against Soviet Russia. Russia has foresight of the events to come and that is why she is trying to build up an Eastern European bloc for her security and support. Russian excesses in these countries, therefore, can be justified for her fear of the Anglo-Saxon imperialism.

Britain does not want to part with power, but wants to give meagre powers to satisfy the people, and to keep the country as an arsenal and retain India in the British Commonwealth of Nations. The policy of Britain in Egypt, Iraq and the Palestine during last two decades went to show that Britain was going to repeat her old game in India too.

Our leaders are getting stuck in the web of British diplomacy, which is the shrewdest in the world. The leaders have proved their hope in the honesty of British utterances, but if the events of past one year indicate anything, they gave definite proof of the nefarious British designs.

Britain with her subtle and slow concessions to India is trying to push forth the reactionary elements like the Muslim League, the Hindu Mahasabha and the princes and send into the background the revolutionary forces like the Congress.

The growth of capitalism in India under the garb of nationalism is infiltrating into the ranks of the national organisation and has the possibilities of turning into fascism. How the Indian capitalists are purchasing and opening chains of papers with the intention of curbing public opinion. Everybody is now turning a nationalist, for the national movement today is on the brink of success, and anybody opposing it is likely to be crushed under the wheel of mass upsurge.

At this stage all nationalists must stop revising their values and form the social contents of independence and nationalism. A National Government in India, unless it is socialist state working for the welfare of masses, has no meaning. That socialist state will not come into existence as a gift from the British Government, for they simply fear it. A final struggle will have to be launched for it.

The next struggle should not be fought on the principle of non-violence. Workers and peasants must be organised for that. When the struggle is launched the industries and means of communications must be paralysed to force the powers to surrender.

A new leadership would emerge to muster the revolutionary forces and launch the struggle and, if the present leadership fails to lead the people at the hour, there is every likelihood of its losing confidence of the people. A united front of the leftist parties may be set up for this purpose.

A struggle with the British Government in the very near future is inevitable and we must prepare the country for it.

We have to change the psychology of the masses who are disillusioned today after expecting freedom to come through constitutional means,

*The New Imperialism and India**

The 26th of January is again with us. The Congress Working Committee has issued a modified draft of the Independence Pledge omitting the 'Quit India' clause. Probably, the Working Committee feels that this clause will be out of place just now. Is not the Congress engaged in negotiating transfer of power? How can it talk in terms of 'Quit India' at the present moment? Besides, if we are to go by the declarations of some of the prominent members of the Working Committee, the British have made up their mind to go. Indeed, this is what British officials, civil as well as military, have been saying to Indians for some time past. This, according to them, makes the reference to 'Quit India' out of place. And yet the Working Committee is asking the people to take this old pledge again. Why cannot the Congress make it possible for the country to declare independence on the 26th January 1947? There is that resolution on Objectives, moved by Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru in the Constituent Assembly. Why cannot the Congress ask the people to confirm this declaration on the 26th of January and take a pledge to implement it in accordance with the plan of action put forward by the Congress? Why cannot the Congress proceed to enforce it by fixing a time limit within which Britain must withdraw completely and ask for the date when the British Army will leave Indian shores?

A SUGGESTION

This suggestion should not be taken lightly when a responsible British paper like 'The New Statesman and Nation' can, in all seriousness, make such a proposal. I do not see why our leaders should hesitate in making such a demand. Their hesitancy in making such a demand can lead only to one conclusion, that they are cocksure that the British are of their own accord contemplating such a step in the near future. Are our leaders so sure that the British are prepared to quit immediately? But they do not see the

*National Herald, January 26, 1947

necessity of such action or are they afraid to force the pace lest the golden link they are trying to forge should break?

NO QUITTING YET

The declarations of our leaders point to the former conclusion and their actions indicated the latter. Politically-conscious sections in India, or for that matter, abroad, do not believe that British imperialists have suffered a sudden attack of high moral idealism which compels them to get out of India or wind up their widely-flung empire as early as possible. There is no evidence to support such a contemplation while there is plenty of it to support the view that British imperialists are trying to hold on to their empire as best as they can. The imperialist mentality is still there, only imperialism has changed its technique under altered circumstances. Here and there they may look like withdrawing. But they are offering to recede only as far as they are forced to and as far as they feel is essential in order to be able to retain control of the next.

THIRD-RATE POWER

That things have become difficult for Britain and its empire is true. This last war has reduced England to the position of a third-rate power. Britain today can neither defend its empire nor refloat itself economically without the help of the United States. Its weight in world politics has considerably been reduced. It has lost its old commercial and financial supremacy. The volume of its export trade is diminishing and it is losing its old markets. Many members of the British Commonwealth are making rapid strides in the field of industry and are increasing their production. Iran being the world's broker, England has become a debtor country. Its foreign investments have largely vanished. Many members of the Commonwealth are no longer interested in regional defence and are for this purpose gravitating towards the USA. These dominions are, therefore, setting up interests which come into conflict with those of the mother country and there is a tendency to weaken the empire from within. The result is that the British Empire is losing its old solidarity and is not as united today as it used to be.

Again, everywhere in the East, revolutionary and national consciousness of the people has been heightened and powerful freedom movements are shaking the foundations of British imperialism.

DEFENCE PROBLEM

Britain's defence is becoming a difficult proposition. It is not possible to

defend the British Isles from the weapons of warfare like the atom bomb, the rocket and the aircraft and as England has so far been the beast of the empire all the defences of the empire have so far been concentrated in England itself. For the safety of England and her empire it has now become imperative for her to change her military strategy. The new proposal is to establish military bases in Africa and to disperse industries in the continent of Africa. Moreover, a common defence is being thought of in alliance with the United States.

TWO BLOCS

Again, a new antagonism is developing all the world over. The world is being divided into two blocs—the Anglo-American bloc and the Soviet bloc. The unlimited expansion of the US has made it the world's greatest military power. The prosperous capitalism and the military strength of the US are today the mainstay of British prosperity and political supremacy. It is true that American capitalism has a large base at home and near about for expansion and exploitation and has so far not assumed the form of an aggressive imperialism farther away from its base. It, therefore, does not seriously come into conflict with British imperial interests and a sort of partnership seems practicable. That is not the case with the other great power of the world today, namely, Soviet Russia. So, the British Empire and Soviet Russia came into conflict in Europe, Iran and elsewhere. This handicaps British imperialism in its attempts at domination and exploitation of Asia and Africa.

BRITISH LABOUR

Again, at home, British capitalism itself is being subjugated more and more by the rising power of the people of Britain. The Labour Party also is not having an easy time. The opposition to some of the policies of the Labour Government is growing. The controversy on foreign policy in which 82 members abstained from voting is symptomatic. It clearly shows that Mr. Bevin's foreign policy is being more and more disapproved and dependence on America is not being relished.

It is not clear to many why the Labour Government which claims to represent the British working class should become a tool of America and entangle itself in the meshes of American imperialism. The alliance of a Socialist Government with American imperialism which forebodes to be the great danger of the world seems strange to some who also realise that if the Labour Government remains true to its socialist policies and election pledges it will have to come into conflict with imperialist America. In no

case do the workers of England want to become responsible for a war with Russia. They want to remain friendly with America but do not want to involve themselves in its quarrels with Soviet Russia.

Besides the question of foreign policy, there are domestic matters on which a difference of opinion is growing between the leadership and the rank and file. The policy of nationalisation is not being speeded up and the housing problem is becoming acute. For all these reasons a doubt has been raised in the minds of earnest and serious men whether the Government will push its programme of socialism or will follow a policy of drift and accommodation to vested interests.

NEW IMPERIALISM

These various factors have forced Britain to drastically revise its policy in the East. It has become impossible for it to govern its colonies and dependencies in the old way. A new kind of imperialism has been forced upon her which gives the impression of withdrawing politically, of trying political appeasement with subject countries in return for economic and military advantages. But there is only as much attempt at political appeasement as is justified by circumstances and the advantages to be got. So there is no desire to get out of the Sudan, Palestine, Burma, Ceylon and India completely. On the other hand, consistent and persistent attempts are in progress to manipulate and gerrymander things in such a way as to neutralise, handicap or moderate the rebellious nationalism of the dependent countries and thus salvage as much of the British empire as possible. The separatist movements are being encouraged in India, the Sudan and elsewhere with a view to weaken nationalism. British rulers do not trust the resurgent progressive and democratic forces and they are everywhere using reactionary bearers as their tools to block the path of progress. They are most anxious that the new power that may emerge in India should be both friendly and conservative, for their minds are so constituted that they cannot trust a genuine democratic party which is not dominated by capitalists and other vested interests.

PART OF A PLAN

So that what is happening in India is part of the new imperialist plan of getting things done without show of force as far as possible by appeasing the nationalist parties and trying to draw them into partnership with British imperialism. The Muslim League and the Princes are being used for this purpose and an attempt is being made to weigh things against Indian nationalism in such a way and to such an extent as to overpower it, to

neutralise it or at least to under-rate its militancy and destroy its striking capacity. It is creating new difficulties in our way just to demoralise us and to produce situations in which it may be called upon to arbitrate between contending parties.

The way to meet this menace is to prepare for struggle and a final showdown. Even while we negotiate, we must keep our powder dry. Like Aung San "we may hope for the best but we should prepare for the worst". The British are not going in the sense in which we want them to go. They are preparing a new strategy on all fronts for effective recovery. In this they have the fullest support of the United States. They will see to it that the vital interests in the new set-up are maintained intact. It is becoming more and more obvious that they will have to be driven out if we want to build a united and democratic India. We must prepare for that.

*Social Objectives of Congress**

The Congress must lay down a new programme and give a clear lead to the people about social objectives that it would pursue if it has to survive. The Congress could either strive for a democratic state or for a totalitarian state. A democratic state in the present context must have socialist leanings and must lend all support to peasant and labour movements and the expansion of mass education. The establishment of a democratic state would clear the way for building a socialist state, but a socialist state could not be brought into existence by the Congress with its existing class composition. The Congress, though it had undergone changes in its class composition during the movements of 1921, 1931 and 1942, has still not become an organisation that could be turned into an instrument for building up a socialist state.

No single leader could bring about a socialist state. It would have to be built up by labourers and peasants and by a party in which they are in majority.

The country has not become fully independent and the freedom that has been attained is limited to British India, the States remaining as autocratic as ever. The people at present are in the grip of bitter communalism and are, therefore, not looking into the social contents of the freedom they have attained. After some time when communalism would abate, the economic question would again come to the forefront and the people would start clamouring for better living conditions.

The Congress must change its policy if it wanted to flourish in the future. If it does not do so it will remain only an election-fighting machine and jobbery and corruption in its ranks would increase. Even a strong constitution will not be able to check the corruption.

Socialism is not a dogma and it is silly to circumscribe it only on the basis of Marxist classics. It will have to be altered and fitted into varying conditions and traditions. Religion is a dupe for the people but there have been many progressive trends in the various religions of the

**National Herald*, July 25, 1947.

world that has helped socialism in laying its foundation. In India, the Buddhist school of philosophers were of that type; one will have to understand and propagate their philosophy to establish socialism in the country.

Youth is looked down upon in India and China. They have no rights or privileges. They are the sole monopoly of the old statesmen. But now they are destined to play an important role. With the achievement of freedom, the youth movement too, like the Congress, its parent organisation, will have to alter its programme. The youth is the barometer of society, reflecting the coming events and changes.

*Need for Study of Social Problems.**

An era has ended and a new era has set in. Today, the common man has become a fully conscious being and he wants to remould the destiny of the new age. This is the age of common people. The whole world is knit together, and there is the urgent necessity of bringing the different social systems on a common basis with a view to developing a global culture for mankind. Unless there is a thorough grasp and study of the intricate social problems, no statesman can succeed in finding a proper solution for them.

As freedom has been achieved, we are faced with new situations and we need an entirely new set of young men and women to tackle the new problems. The battle of freedom required brave and sacrificing, patriotic young men ready for self-immolation and effacement at the altar of the motherland. But as Lenin remarked that after a revolution the country required better educated and trained hands to administer law and deal with the post-revolution problems, so we in India also require new qualities of the head and heart without which we cannot manage our affairs efficiently and satisfactorily.

Therefore, it is imperative that our youngmen should devote themselves to a thorough study of the social problems of the day. No nation can prosper unless it has learnt to fully utilise the latent virtues of its young generation. If our leaders and rulers want to achieve success and place India at its rightful place in the comity of nations, they must pay due attention to the potentialities of the youth. But I want to make it clear that there are certain duties and obligations that the nation expects from its new generation. They must change their mentality and imbibe a sense of responsibility in their duty towards their country. The old, cheap slogans and propaganda politics must go. You must think vigorously about the task that lies before you.

It is not enough that we have achieved freedom. We have to gain full benefits of our freedom on a revolutionary basis. The revolution is to be the

* National Herald, September 22, 1947.

main pivot of our social structure. By revolution, I do not mean a bloody revolution. A revolution does not necessarily employ violence. It can be a peaceful one as well. But this great revolutionary task can be performed only by youngmen. They cannot achieve this task unless they employ their energy in a more constructive channel. The student movement should get out of the old ruts and prepare the youth for assuming the leadership of the coming age.

*Peace for Progress; The New Slogan**

The existing disorders could be effectively controlled and eliminated only by infusing a new sense of values in the minds of the people, revolutionising the existing social structure and fostering the idea of one nationality and common brotherhood.

Our slogan should be 'peace for progress', for on that basis alone could permanent peace be established. That goal could only be reached by crushing the forces that were behind the disorders and were attempting to foment more trouble under the guise of a revivalist movement.

There can be no peace, unless politics are founded on national unity. For that purpose the people must be roused to action on the basis of fundamental principles that have to be settled in the near future, principles that would inject new blood into the life of the people, give them new values of life and vision of a new world.

Under the shadow of the existing disorders the powers that once fought the nationalist forces are getting together in an altogether different guise to entrench themselves in the seats of power and let loose an era of reaction. There can be no hope for the future unless these forces are eliminated. Should these forces unfortunately gain the upper hand it would mean the end of all the dreams that the people once cherished of a free and democratic India based on equality and social justice.

The present riots had created so much of mutual hatred that it could be combated only by diverting the people's attention into more constructive channels. "Peace for what?" would be their query and it had to be answered.

The growing hatred is being fanned by the vested interests and reactionaries under the name of *Hindu Raj* by people who do not understand the real spirit of *Hinduism*.

The men who had all along deprecated and opposed the people's movement for civil liberties in autocratic *Hindu* States have no right to call themselves guardians of *Hindu* interests.

* *National Herald*, October 20, 1947.

I earnestly appeal that the students should engage in real solid work for the nation. Work should be their watchword. They should remember that politics is not their sole concern as they have also to serve cultural ends.

But in subject countries the student movement is always dominated by politics and so long as the national movement will maintain its influence and strength, I shall commend it to them to devote themselves to the cause of communal peace and harmony. It is a work of great political significance and deserves all their attention.

Our slavery is the dominant fact of Indian life. Our first concern therefore, is to win our freedom. But in the present world, freedom cannot be won, much less retained, if the movement of freedom is not inspired by social and spiritual values and does not express the actual needs and interests of the masses.

A vigorous youth movement is a sure indication of the instability of political and social conditions. It shows that the rights of the future are in conflict with the traditions of the past and that a new equilibrium is sorely needed.

The nature of the youth movement in each country is determined by its social conditions. After the first world war, the European youth movement is a protest against the regimentation of discipline and chauvinism. It breathes high idealism and stood for individual freedom and human comradeship. The German youth was misled and betrayed into fascism.

NEW INTEGRATION

Students have to decide whether their movement will be a mere symptom of a disease or will be the initiator of a new era and the architect of a new society. Time is ripe for a change. Basic institutions and ideas are disintegrating and the whole tendency is to achieve a new integration.

If they have to realise their destiny, they should stand for intellectual freedom, human solidarity and full democracy and should work for a new world order based on freedom, equality, social justice and peace. They should not render mere lip service to democracy. But they should cultivate democratic and cooperative habits. Paper constitutions will not in themselves usher in a new era. Democracy is a matter of habit and tradition.

Above all they should serve the common man. The million of our fellowmen, who produce all the wealth of the nation, suffer from chronic hunger and unemployment. They are steeped in ignorance and are oppressed and exploited. They look up to them for help and as future leaders of the nation it is their duty to study their needs and to serve them to the best of their ability.

Our struggle is entering a new phase. It demands real unostentatious

work. Every movement in this country will be judged in future not by the noise that they make but by the amount of genuine work they accomplish. Celebration of national events and occasional demonstrations is necessary. But we must realise that it is high time that we rise above the agitational plane.

MORAL PRINCIPLES

It is unfortunate that the tendency of the present age is to sacrifice intellectual independence, individual freedom and even moral principles to power-politics. The moral level has low and every action is justified in the name of realism. This spirit is invading every organisation. When this happens, the movement loses its creative appeal because free occupation with power-politics tends to vitiate the very object which the movement professes to serve.

*Power to Masses; Freedom for Common Man**

The Socialists have left the Congress because they felt that if democracy was to be protected and socialism was to be established in India, they ought to part company with the Congress. The Congress has become a moribund party. That fact is reflected by the new Congress constitution. There was no place for Socialists within the Congress. The Congress has invited the Leaguers and Hindu Mahasabhaites to dissolve their organisations and accept the Congress as the only political organisation. The Akali members of the East Punjab Assembly had recently been admitted to Congress ranks.

The Socialists have felt that the people had developed smugness since the attainment of independence. This was fraught with dangers. If the Indian nation is to advance, it must be kept alive and working, and every individual should be made to feel the “thrill of freedom” and his responsibility towards the State. Every citizen should be made an active participant in the running of the Government and the country’s affairs. The social and economic inequalities in the country must be removed and the basic needs of the people must be satisfied. The people should reap the fruits of freedom.

The Socialists, actuated with these motives, had decided to fight the district board elections. The local bodies are the real institutions that affected the villages where the people of India live. On good and honest working of those institutions depends the success of democracy and that is why the Socialists have decided to fight them.

ODDS AGAINST SOCIALISTS

The Congress has a huge machinery at its command and unlimited resources. There is a likelihood of the officials working for the Congress. Yet the Socialists were undaunted because they know that they have the blessings and sympathy of the people to whom they were pledged to serve. They have also a band of determined workers with a high sense of

*Based on speeches, published in *National Herald*; April 3, April 16, 1948.

idealism. If the Socialists have taken the right path and are sincere, they are bound to succeed. If they are wrong, they should not be sorry if they perished.

The Socialists would take in their ranks only good and honest men. They do not want a crowd. They want to infuse new blood in the political life of the country and make the people conscious of their rights and duties. It is high time the people realise that politics is not the affair of a limited few. It is incumbent on the people to exercise their rights and take an active interest in the affairs of the country. Without that, the existing unequal structure of society could not be altered.

When any revolutionary party comes into office and hesitate to take revolutionary steps, there is every likelihood of its degenerating into a moribund organisation. At such a time, people with a new outlook and ideology in that organisation either revolts or parts company with it. The Congress has attained its goal of freedom and a mood of smugness is setting in the organisation. A strong and honest opposition at such a time is essential.

The Socialists have left the Congress without any ill feeling. They will never indulge in personal or individual criticism. Their task is to organise constructive opposition.

The last wish of Mahatma Gandhi was that the Congress should change its name and become a party of all public workers. The Socialists, since they have left the Congress, will not use the name of Mahatma Gandhi as they will not use the name of the Congress to which they have equal claims with any one else. However, it would be the earnest endeavour of the Socialists to follow the ideals and traditions of Mahatma Gandhi. They will try to keep up the high moral principles, which the Mahatma preached and practised.

REVOLUTION INCOMPLETE

The Indian revolution is still incomplete. No efforts have been made to ameliorate the condition of the tiller of the soil and to vest him with the power of a free citizen. Nor has he been given an honourable place in society. It is to serve the common man that Socialists have left the Congress along with its power and prestige and resources. They have chosen the difficult path because they know it is the only honest way they could serve the interests of the nation and the common man.

CONGRESS 'TACTICS' IN ELECTION CAMPAIGN

It is the Congress which closed the doors on us. In the new Congress

constitution it was not possible for self-respecting Socialists to remain inside it because it was demanded of them to liquidate the party.

In a recent statement N.V. Gadgil said that the Socialists would be liquidated like the Communists if they came in their way. Such sentiments on the part of a Minister of State betrayed a spirit of authoritarianism which was dangerous to democracy.

Mahatma Gandhi was of the opinion that although freedom had been achieved, the Congress should still remain a national organisation, and that other parties should be allowed to function within the Congress. But Congress leaders did not accept his view nor did they agree to implement Mahatmaji's last wish which demanded of them to convert the Congress into a *Lok Seva Sangh*.

We have a new party. Our resources are meagre and our organisation is in its infancy. If we are defeated, it would mean no worry or shame to us, but, if we win, the victory would establish the soundness of our principles and the justice of our cause.

It is wrong to say that Socialists had left the Congress out of sheer disappointment and had set up communalists and opportunists as their candidates.

The Socialist Party had set up for the presidentship of district boards only those candidates who were at first set up by the Congress but who later on left it. The party is contesting elections only in 30 to 32 districts, and that too not for all the seats.

The tactics that are being adopted by certain responsible Congressmen to get votes and the leaflets issued by Congressmen making undignified and false statements against Socialists are very much deplorable. In Bijnor and Azamgarh, Muslim voters are being told by responsible Congressmen that if they want to demonstrate their loyalty to the State, they should solidly vote for the Congress.

In order to ensure free and fair elections it is necessary that Congress authorities should at once publicly declare that such utterances are irresponsible and that they do not represent the Congress policy.

SOCIALISTS NOT TO RE-ENTER CONGRESS*

I appreciate and very much value the generous spirit of the resolution passed by the executive council of the UPCC. I am specially grateful for a kind word of appreciation in it for us. At a time when all sorts of motives are being attributed to us and we are being accused of disrupting the Congress and when some men in authority and influence are even holding out threats of dire destruction it is heartening to know that at least the

*Letter to the UPCC General Secretary.

highest executive authority of the Congress in this province appreciates our motives which have actuated us to quit the Congress.

I reciprocate the noble sentiments and express our gratitude to the Council for its deep concern for us. It would have given us great pleasure if it was possible for us to respond to its appeal to return to the Congress fold. It is very kind of the Council to say that it has kept the doors open for us but it also knows the condition imposed by the new Congress constitution, which requires us to liquidate our party if we want to remain within the Congress.

I know the Council is in no way responsible for this change in the constitution. We should, therefore, recognise that it is an all-India question on both sides, and as such admits no provincial solution.

I do not wish to say anything at the moment in justification of our decision. It may be that our judgment was wrong, but we would have been false to ourselves if holding the views we do, we do not follow the step recommended by our consciences.

In all humility, I would say that in the circumstances it would be best for both of us to reconcile to what has happened. It hurts us to think that we are not finding it possible to respond to the appeal of our friends. The love that my friends bear for us should not be used to weaken us in our resolve, but should rather help us in keeping straight on the path we have chosen for ourselves.

I hold the members of the Council in high esteem and affection and shall always do my best to maintain our friendly relations. It is a great solace to us to know that in this unjust and unkind world, at least our erstwhile comrades-in-arm are willing to judge us with charity and recognise our past services.

*Need for a Vigorous Philosophy of Life**

India is passing through a cultural crisis. The mental and spiritual epidemic that broke out in India after the war, has killed the human values that we had. Let the universities become the centres of dissemination of new ideas, as only they can resuscitate us.

The loss of the old beliefs and the end of the old values of life had caused a vacuum in the life of the Indian people. For, there is no vigorous social philosophy of life.

No doubt we have got freedom. But we have paid dearly for it. We have lost the human values of which we were proud. The house that we had built and decorated during our freedom struggle is in ruins. We have to rebuild it. We have to teach our youth that India has not future if communalism with its short-sightedness continues to exist here.

If India was to emerge successful through this cultural crisis, we should take immediate steps to revive the magnificent traditions of ancient Indian culture enriched with the blend of new values.

The first and foremost task of the universities of India was to give new ideas and values of life to the young men and young women of the country. These things could be achieved if the people of India turned for guidance to the teachings of Mahatma Gandhi.

Success in these matters depend upon the link between the masses and the university teachers as it was only from the common people that they could get new ideas and new strength to propagate them.

Success in these matters depends upon the link between the masses and the university teachers as it is only from the common people that they could get new ideas and new strength to propagate them.

Social sciences have been badly neglected in India. Though there is provision for teaching of political science, there is practically no provision for teaching of social sciences, as in America. One difficulty is the dearth of teachers of social sciences.

**Based on the speeches published in the National Herald, March 30, 1948 and February 10 1946.*

It is absolutely necessary that different Asian languages should be taught in Indian universities. The Executive Council of the University has planned to start classes in Russian and Chinese languages. The University Grants Committee has recommended the scheme to the Government. Its reply is awaited. The University has also started a diploma class in diplomacy. We wish it to become a degree course, provided we have two full-time teachers to teach the subject.

I earnestly appeal that the students should engage in real solid work for the nation. Work should be their watchword. They should remember that politics is not their sole concern as they have also to serve cultural ends.

But in subject countries the student movement is always dominated by politics so long as the national movement maintains its influence and strength.

I shall commend it to them to devote themselves to the cause of communal peace and harmony. It is a work of great political significance and deserves all their attention.

Our slavery is the dominant fact of Indian life. Our first concern, therefore, is to win our freedom. But in the present world freedom cannot be won, much less retained, if the movement of freedom is not inspired by social and spiritual values and does not express the actual needs and interests of the masses.

A vigorous youth movement is a sure indication of the instability of political and social conditions. It shows that the rights of the future are in conflict with the traditions of the past and that a new equilibrium is sorely needed.

The nature of the youth movement in each country is determined by its social conditions. After the first World War, the European youth movement was a protest against the regimentation of discipline and chauvinism. It breathed high idealism and stood for individual freedom and human comradeship. The German youth was misled and betrayed into fascism.

NEW INTEGRATION

Students have to decide whether their movement will be a mere symptom of a disease or will be the initiator of a new era and the architect of a new society. Time is ripe for a change. Basic institutions and ideas are disintegrating and the whole tendency is to achieve a new integration.

If they have to realise their destiny they should stand for intellectual freedom, human solidarity and full democracy, and should work for a new

*Based on the speeches published in the *National Herald*, February 10, 1946 and March 30, 1948

world order based on freedom, equality, social justice and peace. They should not render mere lip service to democracy. But they should cultivate democratic and cooperative habits. Paper constitutions will not in themselves usher in a new era. Democracy is a matter of habit and tradition.

Above all they should serve the common man. Millions of our fellowmen, who produce all the wealth of the nation, suffer from chronic hunger and unemployment. They are steeped in ignorance and are oppressed and exploited. They look up to them for help and as future leaders of the nation it is their duty to study their needs and to serve them to the best of their ability.

Our struggle is entering a new phase. It demands real unostentatious work. Every movement in this country will be judged in future not by the noise that they make but by the amount of genuine work they accomplish. Celebration of national events and occasional demonstrations are necessary. But we must realise that it is high time that we rise above the agitational plane.

MORAL PRINCIPLES

• It is unfortunate that the tendency of the present age is to sacrifice intellectual independence, individual freedom and even moral principles to power politics. The moral level has gone low and every action is justified in the name of realism. This spirit is invading every organisation. When this happens, the movement loses its creative appeal because free occupation with power politics tends to vitiate the very object which the movement professes to serve.

*Problems of Unity **

The socialists desire to build up a powerful anti-imperialist front to achieve independence of the country and to establish a democratic regime wherein the economic life of the people would be organised on socialist lines. The realisation of these objectives demands unity in socialist ranks. Such unity becomes all the more imperative at this juncture when the national movement is taking a new turn, when the oppressed and exploited masses have to prepare for a great offensive and when a section of the Congress leadership is attacking the Left-wing with a view to suppressing it. It is not possible to postpone it any further.

The CSP has from its inception strived for unity of all Socialists. But, in the past, the attitude of our Communist friends towards the Party and its efforts for unity was not merely one of indifference but of open hostility. They tried to discredit the Party by denouncing it, among other things, as a social-fascist party. Unwilling to accentuate the differences among the socialists we refrained from answering back this campaign of calumny and vilification. Despite our forbearance, the Communists, with characteristic obstinacy, persisted in their antagonism and the CSP could not succeed in uniting all the Socialists.

It is necessary to recollect why a Socialist Party, distinct from the Communist Party, was formed and why it has been called the Congress Socialist Party. Congress Socialism, in reality, is the Indian transmutation of the Russian "Social Democracy." As Lenin pointed out "Social Democracy" expresses the interdependence of two revolutions—one social, that is, of economic emancipation and the other political, that is, of democratic freedom. Lenin has further pointed out that socialist objective can be realised only through the struggle for democracy. In colonial countries the national struggle is a democratic struggle.

Our Party would have called itself Social Democratic Party but for the fact that the name had acquired a bad connotation thanks to the betrayal of the European Social Democrats in the last war and their lining up with

* Congress Socialist, 9 April, 1938.

their respective national *bourgeoisie* in the war. Lenin for the same reason preferred to call Social Democratic Parties, on their reorganisation by him, Communist Parties. The CSP had no desire to adopt the discredited name. Social Democratic Party, and it also had to reject the name of Communist Party.

When the Socialists working in the Congress came together to form a party, certain opprobrium was attached to the Communist Party for its isolation from the national movement. Not only it kept aloof from the national struggles carried on by the Congress but even sought to prevent workers from joining them. Under the circumstances we were constrained to coin a new name: Congress Socialist Party. The word "Congress" symbolises the struggle for democratic *regime*. But the overwhelming reason for affixing it to the Socialist Party was to disabuse the public mind of the damaging belief that the Socialists considered the Congress a capitalists' organisation.

The Party was organised by Socialists who had actively participated in the Congress movement. The Party naturally consisted predominantly of Congressmen, and proletarian elements were limited. Such composition presented before the party the danger of the Party getting over-absorbed in the national movement and neglecting the ultimate objective of capture of power by the toilers. The Communist Party had to beware of a graver danger. Its isolation from the national movement and exclusive absorption in the working-class movement presented the possibility of the neglect of the immediate task of emancipating the country.

The CSP, from its inception, desired, in view of the different origins and the difference in the major fields of activities of the two parties, to have a close understanding between the CSP and the CP. It desired to co-operate with the CP in those labour sectors where the latter's influence was considerable, while the CP was expected to co-operate with the CSP among peasantry and others where the Congress influence was pre-eminent. I have pleaded for such an understanding from my Patna Address onwards. But our Communist friends were not prepared to concede the Marxist character of our Party. Efforts at unity, hence, proved futile but they show that the CSP has ceaselessly striven for unity in socialist movement from its inception.

In discussing socialist unity, the question of our attitude to the Soviet Union is often raised.

Soviet Russia is the only country in the world today where socialist society is being organised. It is therefore the duty of every socialist to help the Soviet democracy and treat as enemy power, and power that harbours aggressive designs against the Soviet Union and be prepared to defend the Soviet Union in case such attack materializes. But this does not mean that

he befriends every power friendly to the Soviet Union. The reasons are obvious. In the interest of defence the Soviet Union is constrained to enter into agreements with various capitalist countries; for us to befriend every one of them would be fatal to our freedom movement. It is necessary to realise that the Soviet Government and the Communist International are two distinct bodies— even the Russian CP has to observe the distinction. We desire to bring strength to the Soviet elbow, because it is a socialist country and we also desire to defend it against all attacks. But we also want to avoid the mistakes of Russia, and if ever we find that Russia is following a mistaken path, it is our duty to point the right road. We can, therefore, never abjure our right of criticism. Such criticism obviously must not lower Russia in the eyes of the people, it must be an expression of our friendly interest in her

In course of time a united Socialist Party must arise—this is a proposition that can scarcely be disputed. But if the impediments to unity are to be removed, we must find some way other than organisational unity because the mutual suspicion that is rife among the socialists—that hinders joint work even on specific issues—bars any efforts at such unity at this juncture.

It is obvious that an individual cannot be a member of two political parties at the same time, even if the parties happen to represent two branches of revolutionary socialism. An individual, at a time, can be loyal to only one Party and accept its discipline. Socialist Unity can, therefore, be realised either by dissolving all the existing, except one, socialist parties, and make it the forum of unity, all socialists joining it. The various socialist tendencies, not inconsistent with revolutionary socialism, should be given adequate representation and opportunities. Full internal democracy and *intra-party* criticism should be assured. This does not of course mean loosening of discipline. The other alternative is to dissolve both the CSP and the CP and organise a new Marxist party on the bases suggested above.

If neither of the alternatives is acceptable to the Communists, the two parties must remain as distinct and independent bodies but with a fighting alliance between them. An *ad hoc* co-ordination committee for the purpose, having representatives of both the parties, would then have to be set up. While retaining the ideological differences, it is possible for Socialists of varying tendencies to work together on such a basis.

But the Communists, it seems, are not yet prepared for such cooperation. While on the one hand, they are clamouring for the admission of Communists to the CSP, on the other, we find them actively trying to oust the Socialists from the leadership of the workers' organisations that they have built up with tremendous efforts and wherein they gave the

Communists opportunities to work. These activities of the Communists suggest that they cannot tolerate the influence of any party except theirs, in the working-class movement. If they desire to co-operate with the socialists on every front, the expression of such a desire should be to cry halt to activities that seek to weaken the influence of the socialists among the workers. If they fail to do this, the Congress Socialists must conclude that the Communists desire to enter the Party, not to realise socialist unity, but to increase their influence in the Congress and *Kisan* movements. Already, such suspicions are widespread among the Socialists and the Communists are responsible for them. The index of the desire of the Communists for unity is to be found today in the working-class movement.

The Communists must not raise, in and out of season, the demand for their inclusion in our Party. No man can be loyal to two political parties at the same time. It is sometimes suggested that in a political party every allied tendency should find representation, and as a corollary the demand of the inclusion of the Communists into the C S P is put forward. We do not desire artificial ideological unity in the Party. No party can grow on suppression of varying tendencies and the creation of mechanical unity. Ideological differences often further the development of a party. But this does not mean that we throw open our doors to persons who directly or indirectly receive their instructions or draw their inspiration from another party. Those who press for the inclusion of Communists in the C S P forget that the C S P is a political party and not a joint front, a national parliament, embracing various sections and classes like the Congress.

Those who press for the inclusion of Communists in the C S P either deny or deliberately ignore the fact that the C S P is a political party. They desire to convert it into the platform of left unity. It is time it is realised that the C S P is a political party with its distinct ideology, programme of work, approach and discipline.

In place of platform of Left unity it is sometimes suggested that C S P is the party of socialist unity. The change of words obviously do not connote any change of intentions. Party of socialist unity is a contradiction in terms. The C S P can be a party that strives for socialist unity, both the C S P and C P can be the parties desiring unity but to suggest that one party is of socialist unity and the other is not is absurd patently.

Those who desire the C S P to be the party of socialist unity also demand the broadening of the Party to include all active anti-imperialists. The intention is clear—to transform the C S P into a broad platform of Left unity wherein the communists would get ample opportunities to increase their influence. It must be the policy of every socialist, as it has always been of our Party, to depute party members in every assembly of anti-imperialist masses. But it is scarcely honest to raise this into a principle

on which the Socialist Party is to be based and to damn it as anti-unity when it refuses to be a party to such a dilution and loosening.

It has been suggested that the number of class conscious proletariats in our ranks should be increased and further that the Party should be increasingly proletarianised. The process cannot be mechanically hastened, it must be of natural growth. As the roots of the socialist party in the working-class movement go deeper and as the movement itself assumes higher forms, the proletarian elements will expand. Proletarianisation does not mean flooding the Party with the members of *Ekka-Tonga* union, coolie union, *bhangi* union, etc., Such indiscriminate admission will destroy the character of the Party—it will no longer be a party of steeled revolutionaries offering the leadership of our national struggle. Needless to say that the Party must ever try to get into its ranks increasing number of conscious workers.

It is worth enquiring whether, after twenty years of existence, the Communist Party has succeeded in ridding itself of the predominance of intellectuals. Has it at last realised proletarian majority? It is hardly a matter of shame to have failed to realise a transformation in four years that the Communist Party has not yet achieved even after 20 years of its existence.

The emphasis of the Communists on “unity” only results in weakening the growing united front mentality in the country. Their arguments intensify the miasma of suspicion and affects even those who desire to preserve united front in some form or another.

CLASS ORGANISATIONS AND THE CONGRESS

*Class Organisations and the Congress**

The Congress has raised the bogey that we are disrupting the struggle for independence by raising the issue of class struggle at this stage. We may be forgiven for pointing out that under present conditions, it is impossible to win independence without mobilising the workers and peasants for the political struggle. Unfortunately, the Congress has hitherto not paid adequate attention to the question of reaching the masses with a correct approach. We do not accuse the Congress of any wilful neglect in the matter. On the contrary, it is the only political body which has tried to establish contacts with the broad masses in the country. Yet, its method of approach has not been correct and, therefore, its efforts have not been as fruitful as they would have been otherwise. A new orientation of policy is much needed in the Congress at the present juncture and it must be preceded by recognition of the fact that there are definite classes to whom an economic appeal has to be made before they can be mobilised for political action and that they have to be organised on a class basis before they can be effectually used for an anti-imperialist struggle.

In view of the fact that foreign imperialism has, with the object of entrenching its position, formed a block with forces of native reaction, namely, the Indian princes, landlords and capitalists. It is all the more necessary for us to rally all the radical elements in the country and to build a united front of the petty bourgeoisie, the workers and the peasants in order to oppose this newly constituted block of imperialism and its native allies. The capitalist class in India is not capable of leading the bourgeois-democratic revolution. Capitalism long ago ceased to be a revolutionary force. In India its social basis is very narrow and, therefore, it cannot act singly. Besides, the feudal agrarian economy in India exercises an influence over all kinds of social relationship. Capitalism, therefore, is in alliance with the landlords and as such cannot be expected to destroy

*Presidential address at the Gujaral Congress Socialist Conference, held at Ahmedabad, June 23-24, 1935.

feudalism. Thus, the exploited masses are under a historic necessity to complete also the task that was executed in the West by the bourgeoisie.

The landlords in India are the creation of British rule and they naturally lean on imperialism for support. Barring individuals, they have as a class remained aloof from the national movement and as the class struggle develops, they will more and more go over to the opposite camp. It is apparent that in future the burden of carrying on the struggle for independence will mainly have to be shouldered by workers, peasants and the lower middle class.

A keen appreciation of the correlation of forces in the country will show the inadequacy of the present programme of the Congress which badly requires a thorough overhauling.

It is sad to reflect that the Congress has persistently neglected industrial labour with the result that labour has been estranged from the Congress. Unfortunately there is to be seen today not only indifference but positive antipathy towards the Congress in organised labour unions. The result is that the Congress is not in a position today to call to its aid political strikes of workers. There have been powerful labour strikes in the country but they have been generally of an economic character. The economic struggle of the workers has not yet passed into the political struggle. This is why labour is so weak today as a political force and weighs so little in the political scale. I am simply stating the present position as it strikes me. I do not, for a moment minimise its importance as a revolutionary force, nor do I deny that by an application of proper tactics it can easily develop into a mighty political force and can establish its hegemony over the national movement. This can be done only in one way under the present Indian conditions.

The workers should participate in the anti-imperialist struggle led by the Congress. In India, unlike Russia, the proletarian weapon of strike has not yet been the signal for mass action; but the working class can extend its political influence only when by using its weapon of general strike in the service of the national struggle; it can impress the petty bourgeoisie with the revolutionary possibilities of a strike. Howsoever one may criticise and denounce the Congress, it is the only broad platform of anti-imperialist struggle in India, and it is the only centre today from which such a struggle can be conducted. It is the broad arena of mass struggle where workers and peasants can receive political education and enlarge their influence and prestige.

Unfortunately, some of the working class leaders do not seem to accept this point of view. Ever since 1928, they have followed a policy of isolation and it is this suicidal policy which has isolated them not only from the working masses but also from the national struggle; and yet the wonder of wonders is that they claim to be the vanguard of the Indian revolution.

Whenever the Congress has conducted an anti-imperialist struggle these leaders have been found not only keeping themselves aloof but also preventing the workers from joining the struggle. Was it not a Communist leader who pulled down the national flag at Bombay and thus, unconsciously acted as an "agent of imperialism"?

THE ROLE OF COMMUNISTS

If communism is the unity of theory and practice, have not the Communists of India played a destructive role during the last six years? Even in the trade union field, they have tried to break the unity of workers by following the policy of dual unionism. I do not like to rake up an old matter because happily trade union unity has lately been restored with the Communists, though it is doubtful how long this unity is going to last. For, I believe that the slogans of trade union unity and united front are given out in order to fight the growing menace of fascism and to secure the sympathy of workers of the world for Soviet Russia if there is an outbreak of war. The Third International, nowadays formulates policies which seem to be simply an extension of the domestic policy of Russia.

Russia is anxious to postpone war and so the former exponent of world revolution has been compelled by the exigencies of her domestic situation to work for world peace. The League of Nations has suddenly become an instrument of peace. I do not blame Russia for entering the League nor do I blame it for entering into non-aggression and mutual assistance pacts with Imperialist Nations. I think that the diplomatic needs of Russia justify such a course. But what I do not understand is the tying of the Third International to the chariot wheel of Soviet Russia. Should it not free itself from the undue domination exercised today by Russian Communists? Let it think independently for itself, unswayed by the domestic policy of Russia; let it cease to dictate from above; and let it give freedom to its national branches to develop their own political strategy and tactics appropriate to conditions prevailing in each country. But today we find that independent thinking is discouraged; and everywhere they follow the facile line of mechanically applying tactics transported from Russia to their own country. It was a part of the general policy of isolation that the Communists were instructed in 1928 to withdraw themselves from all bourgeois organisations.

I admit the experience of China has made them cautious; but if the revolution failed in China, the failure was due again to the rigidity of the tactics that had been prescribed for their use. The initial entry into the Kuomintang was not wrong. The Communist Party of China itself will be the first to admit that if it had not close organisational connections with the national movement it would not have obtained

wide possibilities of influencing the movement; and if it had followed a policy of isolation in the earlier days, it would not have been able today to bring under its control about one-sixth of China.

The necessary result of a policy of isolation is that a party gets itself isolated from the masses and soon becomes transformed into a narrow fossilised sect. A party that wants to establish its hegemony over the national movement must send its members to all the classes; and it is only in this way that its political influence can grow. Socialists must be found wherever the masses are; and they must be in the forefront of every anti-imperialist action and every battle that is waged in the interests of the masses.

The Congress also should enlarge its influence by changing its attitude towards labour from one of indifference to that of active sympathy. It should organise trade unions under the aegis of the Trade Union Congress and should take steps to develop the peasantry into a gigantic anti-imperialist force. The foundation of the movement should be broadened and the classes that are the mainstay of the revolution should be properly organised for participating in the national struggle.

The AICC has, in one of its resolutions in the past, admitted that the exploitation of the masses cannot cease unless a revolutionary change is made in the social structure; and when we ask the Congress to create organs of class struggle we simply ask it to start the process which will sooner or later bring about the change. The change can be brought about only by classes which are interested in initiating the change, and they cannot do so unless they are organised on the basis of their class demands and unless their economic struggle is linked up with the movement for complete independence.

If we are really earnest about achieving independence and if we are sincere in our belief that the *Swaraj* that we visualize is the rule of the masses, there should be no difficulty for the Congress in accepting our programme of anti-imperialist struggle.

In this connection it is pertinent to point out that our resolutions which have been discussed in the Congress are not of a socialist character. I may be permitted to ask, if such a character can be really ascribed to the anti-war resolution and other resolutions as regards entry into legislatures and parliamentary work. The mere fact that they are sponsored by socialists does not give them a different complexion. Even one so-called "socialist" resolution did not speak of socialism but sought to define what *Swaraj* would mean for the masses.

While I am on this subject, I think, I should say a few words in connection with the interview recently given at Bombay by the worthy President of the Indian National Congress.

I am pained to find that our President holds the opinion that we are acting in a way which necessarily leads to lowering the prestige of the Congress in the public eye. I regret to say that a great injustice has been inadvertently done to us by our President. We have declared it so many times from our platforms and the Congress platform as well—and I repeat the declaration today—that we want to enhance the prestige of the Congress, and that we shall do all that lies in our power to build it into a powerful organisation and to make it a fit instrument for conducting the anti-imperialist struggle. Expressions of opinion—different from those held by the orthodox school, and criticisms of the present policies of the Congress—can in no way be regarded as an attempt to lower the dignity of the Congress. We regard ourselves as custodians of the Congress honour, and it is for this reason that we want the Congress to keep firm to the path which it chalked out for itself at the momentous session in Lahore in 1929 and to develop correct tactics and methods of struggle which may lead to speedy success. We think, we are acting within our rights in trying to check the reactionary tendencies which have lately manifested themselves within the Congress, and we hope that our President does not mean to take away from us the important and well-recognised right of all minorities to propagate their views and to convert the minority into a majority.

I hope, I have disposed of the principal criticisms advanced against us by Congressmen. I shall now try to answer such criticism of the ultra-leftists as have come to my knowledge.

CRITICISMS OF THE ULTRA-LEFT ANSWERED

It is indeed very difficult to meet an opponent in argument, who for reasons best known to him chooses to carry on insidious propaganda against you but refuses to come out in the open with his criticism. There is, however, one criticism of the ultra-leftist nature which has appeared in the press and which deserves attention. The substance of this criticism is that as socialism is the special task of the proletariat, it is only the workers' party that can build it; and that to accomplish the task it must act as an independent class force and must have an independent existence, and therefore, it cannot be expected to perform the task which it says it has set before itself.

This criticism obviously does not take into account the circumstances in which the Congress Socialist Party has come into existence and it further ignores the general political conditions of the country.

The reasons why the Party is within the Congress, are not far to seek. The Party has come into existence as a result of a group of Congressmen in the course of the struggle. They came under the impact of the socialist thought

of the world. They saw that a crisis had come over democracy in the West and that parliamentary institutions were crumbling on all sides. They also saw that the fascist menace was growing apace, that capitalism was in a decadent condition and had entered its last stage of imperialism. They saw clearly that the choice before the world now lay between fascism and socialism, and that capitalist democracy seemed to have no future before it. They found the world in the midst of a grave economic crisis which did not seem to end. They found that it was Russia alone which had made substantial advances towards socialism, and that in the midst of the surrounding gloom it was the only hope of the poor, the oppressed and the downtrodden for whom it was a great inspiration today because it is a precursor of a new era for the masses of humanity. Having studied the history of revolutions in other countries they came to the conclusion that the programme of the Congress should be fundamentally altered in order to achieve complete independence. The dire necessity of the anti-imperialist struggle led to their conversion and they quite rightly desired to develop the Congress platform for an anti-imperialist struggle.

As such, there was no question of our leaving the Congress. The responsibility for our organising a separate party should be laid at the door of others. If there had been a genuine working class party in the country applying correct tactics to Indian conditions and employing right methods of work, if it had not isolated itself from the masses and the national struggle, if it had rooted itself in the soil and had followed the maxim that "the fundamental principles should be applied in such a manner as will correctly modify these principles in certain particulars, will properly adapt, and apply them to national differences," if it had not to the contrary allowed itself to become the mere tail-end of an outside organisation which because of its short-sighted tactics and its bureaucratic control has lost much of its former prestige and influence, there would not have been the need of a separate organisation. The Party uses the platform of the Congress for carrying on the anti-imperialist struggle. It organises the peasants into unions and workers into trade unions and is acting in full co-operation with the AITUC in the trade union field. The Party is thus engaged among the masses and the more it identifies itself with them and wins their confidence by actual and concrete work the more it will be able to extend its influence among them.

We are steadily gathering force and we claim that in a brief space of time we have succeeded in creating a favourable atmosphere for socialism and in winning a large measure of support of the rank and file for our programme of anti-imperialist action. In course of time we may be able to amend the rule which confines the membership of the Party to Congressmen only. It is possible that in the fullness of time all the Socialist groups

might be combined into one single party. But until that day arrives we must be content to work through our separate organisations, trying at the same time to co-operate on issues on which we can agree to act together.

I am informed that our socialism is represented as fake socialism perhaps because of our affiliation with the Congress and surprise is expressed at our suddenly growing into socialists, thus throwing doubts on the genuineness of our conversion. In support of this plea it is further said that those who have so long remained under the spell of Gandhism cannot possibly be expected to accept socialism. This observation is more true of the working class which left to itself can attain only the trade union consciousness. We must not forget that the theory of socialism arose independently of the labour movement and it came into being as the "natural and inevitable consequence of the intellectual development of the revolutionary socialist mind."

I understand the ultra-leftists have produced a minimum programme of anti-imperialist action and they want to make it the baiss of their united front activities. This programme is not at all a fighting programme and is grossly inadequate for achieving success in the anti-imperialist struggle. There is no mention of organising the masses against their native exploiters. The economic demands of the workers and peasants that are incorporated in the programme are of a trivial nature and of a reformist character and large masses cannot be mobilised for the anti-imperialist struggle on the basis of such petty demands.

A CONSTRUCTIVE PROPOSAL EXAMINED

The role of the Congress Socialist Party has been recently discussed in a Bombay paper. The writer discusses the question with sympathy and welcomes the Party but suggests that the Party can be effective only if it liquidates itself and merely functions as the left wing of the Congress. It is stated that the Congress cannot be expected to accept socialism as its objective and that, therefore, the talk of socialism within the Congress would render a positive disservice to the cause of the anti-imperialist struggle. I personally agree that the Congress is not a platform for socialism and its main task is to develop the anti-imperialist struggle. But we should not forget that under present conditions such a struggle can only develop if we succeed in linking it up with the economic demands of the masses and this object can only be achieved if there is a party within the Congress that persistently agitates for the acceptance of an economic programme. I also hold that there is an urgent necessity for carrying on an incessant propaganda for socialism amongst the Congress workers, for, the more we succeed in this direction the better are the chances for the acceptance by the

Congress of an effective programme of anti-imperialist struggle. And for this reason, if for no other, the Party must continue to function. This urgent and much needed task cannot be performed by a diffused group and I think our experience of the last twelve months amply justifies the course that we have followed. There remains the further question of our reconsidering the policy we have so far followed within the Congress. I have already expressed my opinion that it does require a slight, though an important, modification, and I have also pointed the direction in which this change should be introduced. I am aware that the matter is receiving the attention of the Party and I hope that if the Party is convinced that a change in its policy is demanded by circumstances it will surely take the necessary steps in that direction.

*Kisan Sabha in Uttar Pradesh**

The population of the United Provinces is about five crores. Though the population has not increased appreciably during the last thirty years, the pressure on land has gone up very much—40,00,000 more men are today dependent on agriculture than at the beginning of the century. The income from land, at the same time, has progressively declined. The result has been increasing unemployment among the people. More and more men every year have to emigrate to other provinces, even to other lands to seek livelihood.

Sub-division and fragmentation of land have been on the increase. Agriculture is no longer an economic industry. There are peasants with holdings of less than one-third of an acre; 3,50,00,000 acres of land are under plough in our province. About 35 million people are dependent wholly or partly one-third on agriculture—that gives an average of one acre per individual dependent on land!

The land revenue has increased appreciably during the last 30 years. But rents have increased much more than revenue—as the 1931 Government Revenue Report showed: while the revenue has increased by Rs. 75,00,000 the rent payments have gone up by Rs. 6,65,00,000. The cost of production has also been going up. The share accruing to the peasant is steadily falling.

For these and other reasons the poverty of the peasants is increasing—and with it is increasing their indebtedness. The UP Provincial Banking Enquiry Committee computed the debt of the agriculturists to the tune of Rs. 124 crores—and that was in 1929! The *zamindars'* indebtedness was only 20 crores out of it. During the post-1919 depression years, the peasants' indebtedness has increased very much.

For about 40 per cent of the peasants and the smaller *zamindars* the burden of indebtedness has been so severe that they are today no better than slaves. In spite of all their efforts, there is no hope of their paying off

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their debts. The scant measures designed by the Government to improve the situation have proved more helpful to *zamindars* than the actual agriculturists. And these measures can offer no succour to the peasants where their *zamindars* are their *sahukars* also. There are hundred ways by which the *zamindars* can, then, recover their dues. Another result of these measures has been the curtailment of the credit facilities for the peasants. The *sahukars* are not willing to lend money in the villages in the context of the new restrictions. And how can a peasant carry on his work without credit? Until the State itself makes provision for cheap credit to the peasants such restrictive measures will not serve, materially, the interest of the agriculturists. The cooperative societies have utterly failed in our province.

The rent regulations are very oppressive in our province—especially in Oudh. The agriculturists are, quite often, liable to illegal extortions, forced labour and payment of feudal levies. The sword of eviction forever hangs on their helpless heads. The recent collapse of prices has created a fresh crop of difficulties. Even the reduction in land revenue has not been passed on to the tenants by *zamindars*. Not a few *Kisans* unable to earn enough to pay off the rent dues and wanting to avoid eviction have been forced to run into debt to meet the rent-revenue charges.

The *Kisans* succeeded, after a severe struggle in 1920–21, in getting one of their demands accepted. Formerly no tenant was entitled to permanency of tenure after seven years of occupation. On the expiry of that period a *Kisan* could be evicted at the whim and will of *zamindars*. Thanks to strong opposition against evictions, the Government made certain amendments to the laws concerned. Tenure-for-life was recognised. Though this amendment law recognised certain rights of *Kisans*, other alterations in the laws provided fresh avenues to *zamindars* to evict his tenant. These laws with all their limitations, have benefited the peasants, still the arch-evil-eviction has not stopped as yet. The peasant slogan today is : “End eviction, recognise occupancy rights”. The peasants also ask for reductions in the rent-revenue charges. Thanks to the continued economic slump, their economy has ceased to be profitable. Partial measures are unlikely to improve their condition. The rural reconstruction scheme has utterly failed. A big slice of the funds set apart for the scheme by the Government has been spent away on office expenses etc. Most of the work done has been of a showy character—designed to please the “visiting” officials.

No one is evincing the necessary enthusiasm for the work. Even these grants are unlikely to be continued in future. These schemes are often no more than window-dressing. They cannot lighten even one of the many pressing burdens of *Kisan*. The slogan of “stud bulls and drink milk” are nothing better than social demagoguery. These schemes do not solve even

a single immediate demand of *Kisans*, to say nothing about their fundamental demands. The only result of the rural reconstruction drive has been to give the Government a troupe of workers who go about the village carrying on Government propaganda.

How are our *Kisans* and the smaller *zamindars* to free themselves from these pressing problems? The condition of the smaller *zamindars* also is far from satisfactory. More than 86½ per cent of *zamindars* pay less than Rs. 100 a year in revenue. 56 per cent of *zamindars* pay revenue of less than Rs. 24 a year, 203 *zamindars* pay more than Rs. 20,000 and about 900 pay more than Rs. 5,000. The total number of *zamindars*—small and big—in our province is 1,60,000, 86½ per cent of these can participate in the *Kisan* struggles. The *Kisans* and the smaller *zamindars* should band together and form strong organisations. When the big *zamindars* are organising themselves there is no reason why *Kisans* also should not come together. It is not in the interest of the smaller *zamindars* to go with the big *zamindars*. The former are *zamindars* only in name. Not a few of them have not even enough land to support their families. Their *zamindaris* are so small that little advantage therefrom accrues to them. They too are sunk deep in the morass of indebtedness.

In 1918 a *Kisan Sabha* was organised in the Allahabad district. There was great unrest in the whole of Asia at that time. To win the war the Allies had declared their acceptance of the principle of self-determination. The enunciation of this principle by President Wilson had roused unprecedented enthusiasm among the oppressed nations. Their hopes rose high. Villagers by thousands had been recruited for the army and the labour corps. By their participation in the war, their mental horizon had expanded greatly. They had also become politically conscious. The prices soared up after the war and peasants were fairly prosperous. The law allowed the *zamindars* to increase the rent by one *anna* in a rupee, once in seven years only. The *zamindars*, therefore, resorted to the eviction laws and started mass evictions. The land was farmed out again at higher rent and big sums were obtained as *nazarana*. A large number of *Kisans* were evicted in this fashion. Most of the *Kisans* had to borrow money on heavy interest rates from *mahajans* to meet the exorbitant demands of *zamindars*.

The demand for *nazarana* exasperated *Kisans*. The Allahabad *Kisan Sabha* began to organise *Kisans*. Shridhar Balwant Jodhpurkar who became famous as Baba Ramchandra, was staying at that time in Jaunpur district and from there was carrying on propaganda among *Kisans* of Pratapgadh district. In 1920, the activities of the *Kisan Sabhas* began to expand briskly. The peasants' demands were:- (1) restriction on evictions, (2) restriction on forced labour, (3) stopping fines, and (4) stopping illegal exactions. The *Kisans* had to vow that—they would remain peaceful, they

would not pay illegal exactions, they would not acquiesce in forced labour, they would sell the produce at the market-price, they would not pay *nazarana* even if the refusal invited eviction, no *Kisan* would accept an evicted field, and that they would not rest till the eviction laws were repealed. Every *Kisan* had to take such fourteen vows.

From Pratapgadh the *Kisan* movement spread to southern *tehsils* of Rai Bareilli district. In 1921 the movement "came of age". Thousands flocked to the meetings. The *Kisan* agitation was absolutely free of communal differences—Hindus and Muslims, men and women were all identified with it. The Government and *taluqdars* were frightened at the awakening among *Kisans*. On January 7, 1921 there was firing at Munshiganj—many *Kisans* were wounded. Firing checked, to some extent, the peasant agitation in Rai Bareilli. But the movement had by then spread in many districts of Oudh. The strongly organised *Kisans* compelled the Oudh officials to reconsider the rent-revenue legislations. Evictions by notice were stopped. The new law granted *Kisans* tenure for life. At that time the non-cooperation movement was at its height. The Government did not want the *Kisan* agitation to get linked up with that movement.

For this reason also the Government became more responsive to the *Kisan* demands. The main grievance of *Kisans* was about evictions. As soon as that demand was conceded their enthusiasm for the non-cooperation movement cooled down. The Congress was not then willing to fight for the economic demand of *Kisans* though in its struggle the Congress assuredly desired the cooperation of *Kisans*. By and by the non-cooperation movement itself cooled down. In late 1921, the *Kisan* movement revived as *Eka Andolan* in the districts of Hordoi, Khiri, Sitapur and Lucknow. This movement was directed against the *taluqdars* and government officials. In these districts the *taluqdars* were exacting more than what they were legally entitled to—and that had caused widespread unrest among *Kisans*. If a *Kisan* worker was apprehended, the *Kisans* would gather in their numbers and would ensure his release—such was their temper! They refused to pay more than the fixed rent. At various places they came in clash with *zamindar's* agents.

There were two types of the *Eka Sabhas*: one dealing solely with economic questions, the other having a political programme also. In their meetings, resolutions about *Swaraj*, *Swadeshi* and the boycott of law-courts used to be discussed and carried. Pandit Janardan Joshi, who was at that time the Deputy Collector of Rai Bareilli, in his report said that the *zamindars* used to overcharge their tenants. In one instance a *zamindar* charged Rs. 9,500 over and above Rs. 77,000 that he was entitled to receive. Another *zamindar* who was entitled to a revenue of Rs. 32,000 used to collect Rs. 45,000. Mr. Joshi himself said: What wonder was there if

Kisāns revolted against that rotten system! Mr. Kalsar, ICS, pointed out another instance in which a *zamindar* charged Rs. 5,700 in lieu of Rs. 1,700! There were other grievances also. Everywhere *Kisan Panchayats* were set up and very often *Kisans* came in clash with “law and order”.

The Government endeavoured hard to put down the *Kisan* movement and with increasing repression, it slowly lost its strength. In 1932 the Congress launched a non-rent campaign. This struggle was quite strong in the districts of Allahabad and Rai Bareilli—elsewhere it failed to gather strength. In 1933 the Central *Kisan Sangh* was established at Allahabad. Its branches have been organised in some four districts. Organised work has not, as yet, got going. In other provinces also *Kisans* have been restive. In Bihar there is a powerful *Kisan* organisation. The All-India Kisan Sabha has also been established. Its inaugural session met at Lucknow in April 1936. It is very desirable that the Congress workers should organise the *Kisans* in district after district in *Kisan Sanghas* on the basis of their economic demands.

*The Peasant Comes of Age**

The infinite capacity of the Indian peasant for endurance of suffering is well-known. His patience is proverbial. The moral and physical conditions of his life are simply indescribable. He has been subjected to many indignities and horrors from generation to generation. He has been made to carry the burden of all the other strata of society—the landlord, the usurper, the merchant, the priest and the official. And yet he has been generally submissive, and it was only when the oppression became extremely unbearable that he was roused into an outburst of indignation and broke out into insurrection like the fury of the elements. Such local insurrections have been innumerable in peasant history but they have peasants' revolts have been few and far between and though conducted on a big scale they have either ended in defeat after a brief spell of political power or have only introduced such a redress of abuses as was necessary to restore his confidence in law and government. The peasant played the role of an ally in the French Revolution and stood behind the urban middle class in its effort to demolish feudalism but the measures that were taken in his interest were of a negative character. He was freed from feudal servitude and instead of his being bound to his feudal lord, he got the freedom to hire out his labour to any one he pleased. The new economic organisation of capitalism required his freedom of movement for its labour supply.

EFFECT OF THE WAR AND THE RUSSIAN REVOLUTION

But the first World War and Russian Revolution ushered in a new era for the peasant. The Russian Revolution not only broke his servile fetters but also threw the mantle of power over him. It created those elementary conditions which were absolutely necessary for the real emancipation of the peasant. The peasant now made a resolute break with his inglorious past.

*Presidential address in Hindi to the Annual Conference of All-India Kisan Sabha, Gaya, March 1939.

His traditional passivity was broken. His conservatism was being demolished. It was not land hunger alone that made him restive but now he wanted an assurance of justice, freedom and culture. He acquired confidence in himself and for the first time in history began to feel his political importance.

The social cataclysm resulting from the war also changed the whole aspect of the agrarian countries of eastern Europe. It marks the fall of the landlords. The privileges which they had enjoyed have been swept away, either without compensation or with inadequate compensation. The reforms have not been illusory this time. They have really been of revolutionary dimensions. The new reforms broke the feudal hold of the landlords on the social and political life of the country.

THE ORIENT MOVES FORWARD

The first World War also effected the Orient very deeply. The beginning of the peasant movement in India may be dated from the period of the War. In certain districts of Oudh there was a powerful movement to secure a revision of ejectment laws, and for the abolition of illegal exactions and the system of forced labour. The abnormal rise in prices of agricultural produce was a strong temptation for the Taluqadar to eject their tenants-at-will in order to secure high premiums for settling land with other tenants. This movement synchronised with the non-co-operation movement of the Congress and the Government was compelled to take measures to ease the situation. The Tenancy Laws were accordingly amended. This was the first occasion when the peasantry in Oudh was deeply stirred and got going.

The traditional outlook of the peasantry began to change and instead of looking up to the landed aristocracy as their natural leader they slowly began to look up to the new leadership of the middle class, as represented by the Congress, for relief and support.

FIRST WORLD ECONOMIC CRISIS

In 1929, the world was caught in an acute agrarian crisis. Colonial countries, like India, were especially hard hit because the imperialist countries shifted a considerable part of their burdens of the crisis to the colonies. Stalin said in his report to the 17th Congress: "Capitalism has succeeded in somewhat easing the position of industry... at the expense of the peasants in the colonies and in the economically weak countries by still further forcing down the prices of the produce of their labour, principally of raw materials and also of foodstuffs". The catastrophic fall in prices

involved millions of agricultural producers in economic ruin. Their little surplus, if any, vanished and their savings in the form of silver ornaments were used up to pay the land-tax. The peasant's burden of indebtedness considerably increased. Many peasants and small landowners were compelled to transfer their lands to those who were fortunate enough to possess more capital and who are able to pay the rental demand of the landowning class. The crisis led to the wholesale ruin of the middle and small peasants. The situation of the village poor was desperate. Mass discontent was arising and expressing itself in peasants' revolts. There was a decline in production and cultivation of poorer land. In the United Provinces alone the number of abandonments increased from 26,860 to 71,430. But, in spite of the acute distress of the peasantry the Government ordered forced collection of land tax from 256,284 cases. Discontent in the countryside knew no bounds and no-rent campaigns were launched in many places to secure relief from the Government. The situation became so serious in UP that the Government, ultimately, was compelled to make reductions in rents to peasants on a permanent basis.

The agrarian crisis was a part of the general capitalist crisis which has become chronic in spite of partial temporary recoveries and no solution of the crisis seems to be possible within the framework of the capitalist system of society.

The chronic economic depression gave a powerful impetus to the Peasant Movement. Peasant organisations rapidly developed in Madras and in Bengal. Peasants' struggle for reduction of rents and taxes and relief of indebtedness became more common. Under the Government of India Act, 1935, many of the peasants were enfranchised for the first time and the right to vote gave them new confidence. When his feudal master, who had inflicted terrible sufferings upon him, wooed and flattered him for his vote he felt for the moment that he too counted for something in his country. At the time of the elections a spirit of independence ran through the peasant masses and they registered their votes for the Congress which had incorporated the immediate demands of peasants in its election manifesto. The Congress had won their confidence and support by an unbroken record of social service of the masses and advocacy of their demands. It had also successfully conducted economic struggles of the masses. The prestige and influence of the Congress in the countryside ran very high at the time of the general elections. The masses were on move on a nation-wide scale for the first time. There were stirrings of a new life on all sides. The masses had shaken off their apathy and had begun to develop a critical temper; they were asking themselves why they should be cheated of a large part of their earnings by *zamindars* who performed no useful function in the social economy of the village?

RISE OF A NEW IDEOLOGY

Moreover, at this time, social philosophers were pointing out how inadmissible it was that land which had not been created by man's efforts and which constituted one of the primary sources of his existence should be owned despotically. In the realm of theory the old view which regarded property as a subjective right was being replaced by a conception which regards it as a social function. This evolution was greatly helped by the exigencies of the first world war which led every State to curtail the property rights of its citizens whenever its needs were pressing. In Italy, the new theory received formal recognition from the State which passed a decree of expropriation of land not cultivated by its owner. The new Constitution of the German Republic enunciated this new principle in its Article 153; which said; "Property carries duties with it. Its use shall at the same time be a service for the general good." And in Article 155; "The cultivation and exploitation of the soil is a duty of the landowner towards the community." The Russian Revolution knocked the bottom out of the old conception by its land decrees. The agrarian countries were powerfully affected by the Russian Revolution and the new point of view began to receive general acceptance. The economic depression disturbed the economic structure of the country and exposed its weakness. The growing pauperisation of the toiling masses became a serious problem. In India landlording is the greatest iniquity on earth. Land can no longer be regarded as a source of rent. It is for use, and, therefore, it should be regarded as a definite and limited means for employing the labour of a category of citizens whose regular occupation was the tilling of the soil.

The class-struggle of peasants given them new experiences and taught them new political lessons. The peasants' isolation has been broken. He has come in contact with new ideas which were so far confined to a few intellectuals. The new view-point as regards ownership of land is becoming the common property of peasants. The dominant characteristic of the village which consisted of a fixed and unvarying outlook and habits of thought is fast disappearing. A revolutionary change has overcome his ways of thinking. There is a new urge for knowledge. He has begun to criticise his surroundings and those whom he rendered unquestioning obedience in the past. The old sadness is giving way to buoyancy, and traditional submissiveness and resignation to a new note of hope and enthusiasm. A new spirit has emerged in villages and if we make proper use of the new favourable situation and give a proper direction to the peasant, we can make them an irresistible force in the country. The virtue of discipline has to be brought home to them, and as peasants' community

has all the world over been well known for its pacific intentions, and been a bulwark of peace, it is not too much to expect that it will resist oppression and defend its rights and interests in a disciplined manner without recourse to violence.

It is clear beyond that this change in outlook and this demolition of the social conservatism of our masses, which is the preliminary condition of all progress, would not have been possible on a nation-wide scale if deep social discontent had not compelled them to give up their passivity and driven them to find a way out. And when peasants in the mass instinctively felt the same urge for a change, it was not difficult for them to take a decision. Old habits and ways of life sanctified by age are not altered so easily. Rural development activities, however, laudable they may be, cannot by themselves be expected to work such a change. As a matter of fact, they can bear fruit on a vast scale only when conservatism of the peasant is broken. The illiterate peasant folk, steeped in ignorance and superstition, can learn only through experiences of life. They loom large to-day in the political arena because of hard economic and social facts. Historic necessity has pushed them to the fore-front and it is a matter of common knowledge that Government of India would not have come out with its programme of rural development if the peasant had not come to occupy a dominant place in the political scene. While on one hand the Government was anxious to show its solicitude for the welfare of the peasantry by inspiring and financing campaigns for developing rural areas, by constructing new projects for the benefit of agriculturists and by adopting measures for their immediate relief, it was organising big landowners to consolidate their power against the Congress so that under the new dispensation they might retain their dominant position and serve the objects of the alien Government.

The Congress Government also continued these activities with the idea of disinterested service to the countryside. The new spirit that had emerged and also the fact that they commanded the confidence of the people made their task easier if they proceeded about the business in a scientific manner. But not much could be achieved as their resources for carrying on these beneficial activities were strictly limited. The realisation of one's limitations is the first postulate of wisdom, and the Congress Government would be well to engage in only selected forms of activities judiciously planned. The greatest need is to bring enlightenment to the door of peasants. Literacy campaigns should therefore be given the first place in any scheme of Rural Development. Education of the masses is the *sine qua non* of all progress. Villagers should also be taught the necessity of co-operative efforts. If the spirit of co-operation is fostered among them they can repair roads, improve water-supply and sanitation, take preventive measures against

epidemics and maintain order. But for this the village community should have real administrative powers in villages and some of its old functions should be revived.

AGRARIAN LEGISLATION UNDER PROVINCIAL AUTONOMY

This brief recapitulation of the various measures that were taken to afford some measure of relief to the impoverished peasantry by various governments in the provinces will show that these measures were not always adequate to meet the immediate needs of the situation. Much more is possible within the framework of the present Act, and perhaps much more will be done in course of time. But it is regrettable that agrarian reforms in all its aspects was being delayed for no good reason. The process was slow, and though the Congress Government enjoyed the backing of the masses, there was in evidence in certain provinces a feeling of hesitation to go fast for fear of the vested interests. Though the measures hitherto taken were only in the nature of palliatives and did not foreshadow any radical change in the social basis of the landowning class yet a hue and cry was raised by the landed aristocracy as if changes of revolutionary dimensions were being incorporated in the statute. The economic situation was so desperate that drastic measures were needed to bring relief to the masses. All that the Congress government did was only to ease a few of the more iniquitous burdens that the peasant was made to bear, but his condition is so miserable that the remaining burdens will prove irksome and heavy and he will make an insistent and imperative demand to be relieved of them as well. It is no doubt true that whatever may happen, the peasantry is not again going to look up to the landowning class as its natural leader. The political influence of this class is surely on the wane although its social basis may not have been wiped out. It would be difficult to restore it. It seems that the storm of opposition that is being raised today to the introduction of agrarian reforms is due to the fear of the future and realisation of the fact that the present measures only mark the beginning of a new era of such successive changes in the agrarian organisation as are sure to undermine their position of eminence and shatter their social base completely.

They are out of their wits. But it is certain that if they had wielded political power today, they would have been compelled by mass pressure to take almost similar measures, of course with great reluctance. No amount of manoeuvring and rural development work would succeed in deceiving the masses nor would it be possible to keep the rising tide of peasant militancy under check. The overwhelming poverty of the masses clamoured for action, and they would take to extra-legal remedies if law did not come to their rescue.

CONGRESS MINISTRIES AND THE PEASANTRY

The Congress Government, it is admitted, laboured under a handicap, for the existing Act did not afford them sufficient scope for initiating revolutionary measures. But it was certainly expected of them that they would exhaust all possibilities of the constitution in order to bring the greatest measure of relief to the masses. Yet still more disquieting fact of the situation was that many of our ministers looked upon Kisan organizations and their workers with an eye of suspicion and distrust. The word of a Kisan worker was generally disbelieved. He was taken to be as stranger and his visit was seldom welcome. It was also distressing that criticism even by Congressmen was not relished. Even friendly criticism was resented and was sometimes unreasonably taken as an index of a hostile attitude. A Government responsible to the people should, instead of resenting criticism, invite it. It should not wait for taking action till the demand becomes insistent or specific action was threatened to enforce these demands. We fervently desire that Congress ministries should be enshrined in the heart of our people. Our ministries should, therefore, be more responsive to demands of the masses and listen to their grievances through their accredited representatives with patience and sympathy. The peasant movement should not be looked at askance. If abuses, which are pointed, are remedied and gross inequities are redressed, there will hardly be an occasion for peasants to have recourse to direct action. Adequate legislative measures should be taken to give protection to tenants against village usurers and village *bantias*. The question of rural indebtedness should be carefully, examined and if rural debts cannot be wiped out completely, the burden should be considerably eased. Special attention will have at the same time to be paid to the provision of capital and cheap credit facilities for farmers. Suitable laws should be enacted for the marketing of agricultural produce so that middlemen's profits be eliminated. Very close attention should be paid to the promotion of subsidiary industries and measures taken for comprehensive land improvement. Government support and encouragement should be given to farmers and an active agrarian policy should be followed.

NECESSITY OF PEASANT ORGANISATIONS

The question is often asked where is the need for a Kisan organization when the Congress membership predominantly consists of peasants and the Congress has in its agrarian programme of Faizpur and the Economic Rights Resolution of Karachi incorporated many of the demands of peasants in its programme. The single answer is that the Congress being a

multi-class organization, peasants are not able fully to assert himself in the national organization. His attitude towards other classes is not very free but is constrained and he finds himself lost in a mixed gathering. In order, therefore, to enable him to give up his hesitancy and to assume a more independent attitude, it is necessary to give him preliminary training in an organization of his own class.

Besides, the Congress being a national organization, is not in a position to accept the basic demands of peasants or for the matter of that any other demands unless pressed hard by circumstances. The dire poverty of the Indian masses has, from very early days, engaged the attention of the leaders of India public opinion, but they treated it as a political grievance to be attributed mainly to the heavy drain on India and not something which was inherent in the economic structure of the country and which could be removed only by revolutionary changes in that structure. The Kisan organisation is therefore necessary to exert revolutionary pressure on the Congress to adopt more and more the demands of peasants. Such pressure has been applied in the past with good results and today the Congress is pledged to fight for the interest of peasants. And how can the Congress act otherwise when it claims to represent the nation and when, as we know, the huge exploited mass of peasants does constitute the nation. The Congress therefore, if it wants to serve the national interest, must seek to abolish the basis of all colonial and feudalistic exploitation.

As the level attained by the Congress organization is uneven in different provinces and as several committees are controlled by *Zamindars* elements, the resolutions of the Congress cannot be implemented and remain in practice a dead letter. In such places, peasants will not receive that assistance from the Congress Committee to which they are entitled and their grievances will go unredressed for want of advocacy. It is exactly in such places that the existence of the Kisan Sabha will be mostly needed to carry on their day to day struggle. During the tenure of Congress ministries in eight provinces it became a part of the normal activities of the Congress to receive petitions from peasants and to help them in securing redress of their grievances, but cases were not wanting when an individual committee did not interest itself in the matter for the simple reason that it was controlled by *Zamindars* who were not true to the Congress programme and who used their position for frustrating peasants' rights and claims on the organization. Again, we do not know whether this special interest which is being evinced today by Congress Committees in the day-to-day questions of peasants will be kept up at the present level.

For these various reasons the organization of Kisans in Kisan Sabhas is a necessity and when the right of Kisans to organize themselves in unions has been again and again recognized by the Congress, is it proper, is it wise

to insist on Congressmen remaining aloof from Kisan organizations? Though peasants ordinarily do not always distinguish between the Congress and the Kisan Sabha—and this fact supports the contention that Kisan Sabhas should not be suspect—it is a fact that the name ‘Kisan Sabha’ is dear to them and is a word to be conjured with. Kisan Sabhas will therefore be formed, if not by Congressmen, by others who may direct the movements into wrong channels and cause irretrievable loss to the national movement by setting them up as a rival political organization or as a communal and sectarian organization representing only a particular community or class division of the peasantry, thus causing utter confusion amongst the peasantry and weakening their movements by breaking up their solidarity.

RELATION BETWEEN CONGRESS AND KISAN SABHAS

If the necessity for a separate organization of peasants is established, it is necessary to emphasise the imperative duty on *Kisan Sabhas* to enter into friendly relations with local Congress organizations and to carry on their activities in co-operation with them as far as possible. The assistance given by the Congress Committee will not only be of great value to them, specially at the present juncture, but will also accelerate the process of making the Congress *Kisan*-minded. It is a matter of experience that when the Congress was placed in power by the support of peasants and since special responsibilities devolved upon it for looking to the interests of the peasants, it became more and more *Kisan*-minded. The process is, however, not yet complete and it will take some time before it is so. But if after importunating their help no response is forthcoming, the *Kisan Sabha* will have no option except to move independently in the matter.

There should be, however, no desire to enter into rivalry with the Congress. The desire to gain predominance over the Congress should be checked. We must remember that the two organizations are complimentary to each other. Each is strengthened by the support of the other. We are bound to make grievous mistakes if we do not constantly keep in view the complimentary character of the two organizations. *Kisan Sabha* are primarily to be organized to secure the economic rights of peasants and conduct their day to day economic struggles. But the colonial exploitation from which the peasant suffers cannot be ended without achieving complete independence and as he cannot enjoy political freedom without political power, so long as India is in bondage, it is necessary that peasants should strive for national freedom in co-operation with other classes.

The Congress is the symbol of national freedom and is the organ of anti-imperialist struggle. The peasants therefore has to be taught to love

and claim the Congress as their own organization. A step-motherly behaviour towards it will not do. If the economic struggle is to be linked up with the national struggle, in order to give social content to the national liberation movement, it is only just and proper that the two organizations should be inter-locked in permanent union. Jealousies and mental suspicions arise from time to time and endanger the union. Over-enthusiasts on both sides, taking a narrow sectional view, not knowing the importance of one to the other, may cause trouble. Irritants will be provided by each which may lead to a breach but if we exercise patience and look at the matter calmly and dispassionately we will put up with irritations and not allow them to lead to trouble. The Congress also will be wise in recognizing the fact that *Kisan Sabhas* have come to stay and therefore it is politic to cultivate cordial relations with them and see that they are developed on correct lines. An organisation that claims to be national cannot afford to be hostile to an organisation of peasants provided it is anti-imperialist in character and is not anti-Congress.

The Congress also cannot gain its objective without mass action on a national scale and it will need the services of class-conscious militant peasants who will be ready to undergo any amount of suffering and sacrifice for the national cause.

The two, therefore, should wish each other well and each should find fulfilment in the other.

However well-intentioned one may be, the existence of two organisations may lead to some amount of friction, but this should not frighten us if we treat them as complimentary to each other. It is, therefore, all the more necessary that everyone of us should take special care not to do or say anything which may lead to undesirable consequences. The hostile attitude of office-bearers of a particular committee should not lead to an estrangement of *Kisan* workers from the Congress organisation. A few persons do not represent the Congress, and if they misbehave that is no reason why we should turn against the Congress itself. The Congress, after all, is the people's organisation for realising our destiny, and if some people do not allow it to function as such in certain places, we should not lose patience and begin to think that the Congress is not our organisation. We should not try to gain sectional advantages over each other by the cheap method of abusing and by out-bidding each other in making promise which may not be fulfilled. As Congressmen we have to take care that the Congress does not become the dumping ground of all sorts of opportunists and self-seekers. In the same way, *Kisan* leaders have to see that their organisation does not provide shelter to mal-contented and disgruntled person who want to use it as a spring-board.

PROBLEMS OF PEASANT ORGANISATION.

The peasantry is not a homogenous class. It has many class divisions among itself, whose interests are sometimes conflicting. The question, therefore, arises as to which class should comprise the organisation. If the organisation is to embrace within its fold all sections of the peasantry, the interests of various sections *inter se* should be harmonised and internal conflict avoided.

Our task today is to carry the whole peasantry with us. In determining the question posed above, we, as revolutionaries, cannot allow ourselves to be guided merely by the conception of social justice or a sort of romanticism. If romantic conceptions were to shape our resolves and prompt our action, we would aspire to organise first the agricultural labourer and the semi-proletariat of the village, the most oppressed and exploited rural class which suffers the worst degree of economic and social bondage. Our conception of justice certainly prompts us to save first the interest of those who suffer most, but if we do so, we shall certainly be neglecting the huge exploited masses, consisting of small and middle peasants and landowners with small incomes who are in no sense better than small peasants. The peasants in the masses would in that case remain aloof from anti-imperialist struggle and we shall thus lose a much more valuable ally than the village poor.

From another consideration also it would appear that the interest of the village poor can best be served in the present stage by mobilising the peasantry as a whole and not by splitting it into its various sections, and placing them in irreconcilable opposition to one another. If the agricultural labourer is landless, it is no fault of the peasant that it is so. It is only the state that can satisfy his land hunger and political action will be necessary before this hunger can be satiated. The colonial exploitation, to which he is equally subjected by a foreign imperialism, can be terminated only by political action, and it is evident that such action cannot succeed unless the peasant in the masses is set in motion against it.

The question of wages, so far as the peasant is concerned, cannot be satisfactorily settled so long as his earnings do not show any appreciable increase. It is very difficult for him today to make out an existence on the little piece of land which he tills. The little piece of land has become a part of his being and in spite of hard labour he finds himself unable to extract a modest maintenance from it. His capacity to pay is strictly limited, and unless it is raised, it is impossible for him to pay more wages to his more unfortunate brother, who lives as wage-earner and has no supplementary source of income. It is only when the peasant's condition is ameliorated and the productivity of land is increased that he will be able to pay better

wages. The agricultural labourer can, however, ask for better wages from rich peasants and landlords. The village poor must recognise his class solidarity with the bulk of the peasant in the present stage; it is only when he acts in co-operation with other sections of the peasant community that he can hope to improve his lot. He cannot afford to be either indifferent or hostile to the agrarian movement.

THE PROBLEM OF AGRICULTURAL LABOURERS

It is true that the present programme, which may be representative of the interests of the bulk of the peasantry, will not contain much to obtain the favour and active support of the agricultural labourers and for this reason wage-earners will not usually be the leaders of the agrarian movement. It is also true that his interest in political change would be very weak indeed and would not be a sufficient inducement for him to take an active part in the movement. Yet all the same, he instinctively feels that he should cast his lot with the bulk of peasants. His participation in the peasants' movement will compel the leadership to include such items in the programme as can be safely incorporated without detriment to the general interest of the peasantry. Agitation for the abolition of the system of forced labour is obviously in his interest. There are many agricultural labourers who have also a little piece of land and if they happen to be tenants-in-chief, they can get occupancy rights and will be benefited by the new law. The *Kisan Sabha* can also agitate for better wages from rich peasants and landlords. It can also demand from the state that barren land should be reclaimed and experimental state-farms should be established on which agricultural labourers be employed on decent wages. Again peasants should realise that if they want that their exploitation by the landlords should cease, they in turn should live on friendly terms with the rural proletariat. The number of landless peasants is ever on the increase and if today these internal conflicts have not come to the surface, in the coming days they are bound to accentuate. Class divisions within the peasantry will slowly mature, and if we are not fore-warned, landless peasants may come often into hostility with the agrarian movement. Our opponents know quite well that peasants do not form one indivisible class and they are exploiting this fact in order to split the peasant movement. The landowning classes always twitted Congress governments about forgetting the interest of agricultural labourers. In this way, they wanted to wean away from Congress the depressed classes.

Further, as agricultural labourers mostly belong to the depressed classes, it is possible that efforts may be made to organise them on a communal basis for the redress of their economic grievances. All such efforts are bound

to retard the progress of the community if they bring about conflict with the peasantry. They will lead to a definite hostility between wage-earners and the peasant who employs hired labour. In places, however, where agriculture is being exploited on a capitalist basis, farm labourers can and should be organised to demand higher wages.

Unfortunately, the agricultural labourer suffers from double bondage. The peculiar caste system of India has degraded him on the social scale. The social reform movement which seeks to abolish untouchability is, therefore, to be welcomed. It will raise his social status and will serve to make him conscious of human dignity. But unless the material and moral condition of his life is immediately improved, social reform movement, however beneficent it may be, will not go a long way to make him a valuable self-respecting member of society.

A DETAILED ALL-INDIA PROGRAMME IMPRACTICABLE

These are some of the difficulties which will come in our way as the movement develops. The question of framing an agrarian programme is, therefore, of considerable importance. It is clear that our appeal should be to peasants in the masses.

A further complication is introduced by the fact that agrarian conditions differ from province to province. There is no uniform land system in the country. The problems of *Ryotwari* provinces are of a different character from those of the *Zamindari* provinces. Again, there are so many varieties of land tenure and revenue system that the agrarian problem is one of immense complexity. The all-India organisation can, therefore, include in its programme only the more important items and give freedom to provincial branches to evolve agrarian programmes of their own to suit local conditions. As the movement develops, new problems will arise, which will demand our attention, and we will be called upon to amend our programme to suit changed conditions.

DANGERS IN OUR PATH.

There are certain other difficulties which we cannot overlook, if we wish to develop the movement on correct lines. In certain parts of the country, where the bulk of landowners are not of the same religion as the mass of peasants, *Kisan* organisation has assumed a communal character. Such organisations have come into existence chiefly because the Congress organisation of the province grossly neglects the interests of peasants. The All-India *Kisan* Organisation has to contend with real difficulties in such places. The communal disharmony prevailing at the present time makes



Introspection



Acharya Narendra Deva, Jayaprakash Narayan and Yusuf Mahherally—attending the Congress Working Committee at Wardha in 1940.



Flag Hoisting at the Conference of the State people's Conference in Central India.



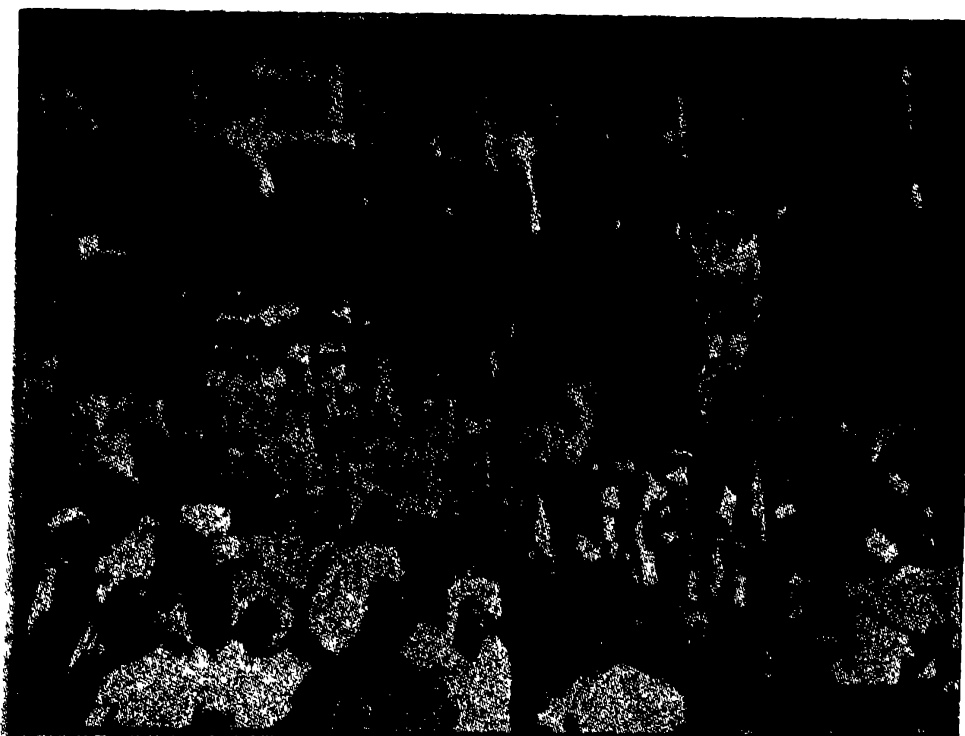
Narendra Deva and Subhash Chandra Bose at the office of the "Sangarsh" in Lucknow.



Narendra Deva, President-Elect of the Provincial Conference of the Congress Socialist Party.



Acharya Narendra Deva taken in a procession.



Addressing the annual conference of the State People's Conference of Central India.



Narendra Deva and Jayaprakash Narayan at the annual conference of the Socialist Party in Kanpur, 1946.



Narendra Deva before his arrest in Lucknow in 1940.



Narendra Deva, Jayaprakash Narayan, Swami Sahajanand Saraswati at the Study & Camp in Sonepur, Bihar in 1935.



Narendra Deva with Mino Masani and Achyut Patwardhan at the Lahore station in 1939.



Narendra Deva taking salute at the Conference of AICC in Delhi, 1939.



Narendra Deva talking to military officers at Ahmadnagar Fort.



Reception to Narendra Deva by National Union of Students and Socialist Party at VT, Bombay



Addressing the meeting of the Socialist Party at Worli

even co-operation between the two parties sometimes impossible, not to say of the merger of the two organisations. Though the agrarian movement may have received impetus from this fact in such regions, it cannot be considered as a healthy movement from the view-point of the national struggle. The peasants' movement cannot afford to be split on communal lines. The multiplicity of peasant organisations will add to the confusion. The present position can be altered not by exhibition of anger or impatience. Our workers should try to win the confidence and support of peasants by selfless hard work and the more they will identify themselves with the peasant masses the more they will succeed in the task. But to achieve this end, we should also try to create cadres of workers belonging to the same religious community. Our workers should also try to negotiate a merger with the leaders of the communal peasant organisation. The Congress also should shed its narrow outlook and devote its attention to peasant work in the province.

MIDDLE CLASS DOMINATED CONGRESS ORGANISATION

In certain places the Congress organisation is controlled by professional men, merchants and moneylenders of the city and as their interests collide with those of the rural population, they cannot be expected to safeguard the interests of the peasantry. The result is that there are acute antagonisms between town and the country and the Congress has very little hold on rural areas. As the condition of the peasantry was desperate, it had to break away from the Congress and have its own organ of struggle. Against this background, it was natural that there should not be any love lost between the Congress and the *Kisan* organisation. It is fortunate that in the immediate past the relationship has considerably improved and the old hostility is fast disappearing. The Congress organisation should realise that such antagonism is in no way conducive to the growth of Congress influence and it should do all that lies in its power to fraternise with peasants and espouse their cause. And this is possible only when there is a change in the local leadership of the Congress, and as the peasant elements are slowly gaining ascendancy, it is to be hoped that in the near future Congress will become a true representative of the peasant interest. We must see to it that the *Kisan* organisation in such places does not develop ultra-leftist tendencies and tend to become a rival to the Congress.

THE DANGER OF PEASANTISM

There is one more danger to which I should like to refer in this place. It is the danger of 'peasantism'. It looks at all questions from the narrow and

sectional view point of the peasant class. Its tenets are derived from the ideal that our economic evolution, as the whole structure of our State, will necessarily have to retain its specific peasant character. It believes in rural democracy, which means a democracy of peasant proprietors. It claims that for the destruction of the war spirit and for the peace of the world such a regime is more suitable. It would, however, give protection to labour as labour cannot be ignored. It would also accept the representative form of Government because it has found favour with many classes. Its programme is not based on any theory, nor does it conform to any particular doctrine but is constituted of elements drawn from all the existing doctrines. It has the outlook of the middle peasant, who has been influenced by modern ideas, and is based on petty bourgeois economy. In its crude form it would mean a kind of narrow agrarianism and an insatiable desire to boost the peasant in all possible places. Such an outlook is unscientific and betrays a mentality which may give exaggerated importance to the small peasant. It is such a mentality which may under certain conditions desire to develop the *Kisan Sabha* as the organ of struggle for our political emancipation. It may also lead to acute antagonism between the town and the country. The scientific outlook will be determined by the laws of social change which assign every class its proper place in the social economy of the future. It will be guided by democratic conceptions of social justice, but the process of accomplishing the object will be governed by the laws of social change. The true objective, in the words of Stalin, will be to re-educate the main mass of the peasantry in the spirit of socialism and to gradually bring the bulk of the peasantry into line with socialist construction through the medium of co-operative societies.

AN AGRARIAN PROGRAMME

As has been pointed out above, 'our objective will be to re-educate the main mass of the peasantry in the spirit of socialism and to bring the bulk of the peasantry into line with socialist reconstruction through the medium of co-operative societies'. We have to work out a detailed programme in accordance with this general line. It is possible to get the main mass of the peasantry to travel along this road if we make the proper approach to them. Obviously, co-operative production, exchange and consumption, on the basis of a free peasantry, is the only sound and practical approach to the problem. Today, all serious scientific thinkers are agreed that the hope of the village and of the peasant lies in co-operation. The village can be set on its feet only as a co-operative commonwealth. And this cooperative commonwealth must have a democratic base, in the shape of free peasants. This alone can release peasant folk from their age-long bondage, provide

the incentive to reorganisation of agricultural production and help to bring about higher and higher production, through co-operative, improved, scientific methods of production, exchange, and consumption in the village. The peasant will not improve his methods of cultivation and increase production if he is certain of being robbed of the fruits of his efforts, in the end, by the *zamindar*, the *mahajan* and other exploiters. If we want to revive the village, we have to democratise it, to rid it of its exploiters of various kinds—people who fatten on others' labour. The village must be cleaned and cleared of these obstructions in the path of progress. Landlordism, therefore, must go. There must be no hesitation, no equivocation in this matter. It will be a betrayal of democracy to shillyshally with regard to the abolition of this curse of the village, this stronghold of feudal reaction and rural oppression. Democracy cannot get going, cannot function in the village, if landlordism lives and continues to distort human relationships in the village and poison the springs of village life. Congress, in power again, must see to its sure and speedy end—its immediate abolition. Let us also be clear about what we mean by this. It means the abolition of all middlemen or intermediaries between the tiller of the soil and the State. It is no use abolishing one set of landlords and recognizing another set in its place. The abolition of landlordism cannot and should not mean the abolition merely of the topmost landlord.

With the landlord must go the *mahajan*, the village usurer. He is another instrument of exploitation and oppression in the village. The village cannot breathe freely and lead a clean life unless this poison is also eliminated. His claims must go immediately under moratorium, his power must be curbed and it must become impossible for him to carry on his nefarious trade. This work will have to be accomplished very carefully and cautiously, so that the village is not deprived of all sources of credit suddenly without our being able to instal a new democratic machinery in place of this undemocratic and oppressive machinery of rural credit.

Along with these, the village must be rid of the corrupt, exacting and oppressive police force, the *Daroga* and his minions, and a clean, democratic machinery of law and order must be installed. The *Gram Panchayat* should have some control over this machinery.

So far as the village is concerned, the machinery of justice is an allied problem. Inexpensive and democratic machinery of criminal and civil justice should be devised and installed. Through an improved system of *Panchayats* can be met the requirement of an inexpensive and democratic machinery of justice in the village for certain types of cases. The Judges may be appointed by the Provincial Government or, if elected by the village, may be assisted by legal experts in the administration of justice.

All these are absolutely necessary if we wish to usher in the co-operative

commonwealth in the village. Some sort of democratic village government is necessary if we wish to reorganise the social and economic life of the village. And the changes mentioned above are absolutely necessary if we wish to instal any system of village democracy. There can be no democracy in the village if the landlord, the *Mahajan*, the *Daroga* and the police continue to exist or function as they have been doing. And naturally, then the village cannot be reorganised and revived. The country, therefore, must get ready for these changes in the immediate future and the Congress must be ready with its plans for effecting these radical changes in our socio-economic structure.

OUR TASK

It will be the duty of the Kisan organisation to place this agrarian programme before the country and agitate for its acceptance.

But the time has come for us to rise above the agitational plane. The *Kisan* organisation was never strong and during the last three years it has been practically shattered. We have to build a new. Let us see that the foundation is truly laid. The task is of immense magnitude. We shall have to set up a stupendous machinery under proper leadership.

We shall also have to make provision for the ideological training of workers. Courage and faith essential are, but unless these qualities are combined with knowledge, the output will not be commensurate with the effort made. But, above all, *Kisan* workers must set their hands to the task of village organisation. For this purpose a group of villages should be selected in every district in which intensive work should be carried on. In the matter of selection care should be taken that the area selected is politically conscious and the population inhabiting the area does not consist of heterogeneous elements. Constructive work and social service will have their full play but our workers should make a dynamic use of such a programme. They should look after the education of village youth. For this purpose they will institute a literacy campaign, organise adult education and start a circulating library. They will organise the peasant youth into a volunteer corps which should be taught to function as a village defence force. They will render many other useful services to the community; they will try to minister to their numerous little needs. Above all, they will organise peasants to fight anti-social elements and forces of oppression and exploitation.

The object in embarking upon such a programme is to create centres in the countryside from which light will radiate in all directions. They will act as guides and serve as citadels in a period of struggle.

This type of organisational work will create a sense of unity and

self-confidence in the village community. It will infuse new life in them. The drab severeness that makes villages life so hateful and unattractive to the village youth will slowly disappear. A positive purpose will be supplied to the people. The corporate life that will be slowly built up will give them new strength and solidarity. The centre will become a robust and powerful organisation ready for action and able to resist all oppression in times of crisis. It will be steadfast and dependable. The importance of such a task for an anti-imperialist struggle cannot be too much emphasised.

It is no doubt true that this kind of work is unassuming and may not attract an average worker who wants to live in the limelight and loves publicity. But a serious type of worker, who has a revolutionary aim and who knows exactly what should be done to accomplish it, will heartily approve of it and devote his heart and soul to the work. It can be asserted with full confidence that this genuine piece of revolutionary activity performed in the true spirit will bring in a rich harvest in fulness of time and that those who throw themselves whole heartedly into this revolutionary work will command affection and respect of their co-workers and will be the pillars of the *Kisan* movement.

NATIONALISM, SOCIALISM AND DEMOCRACY

*National Revolution and socialism**

We are meeting at a time when our national organisation is passing through a crisis. The All-India Congress Committee is going to meet tomorrow to consider questions of far-reaching importance and it is our duty in this conference to decide what contribution we shall make to the momentous decisions of that august assembly

In our endeavours to influence the nationalist movement in the direction of socialism, we are at once met with the criticism, that it is difficult to reconcile nationalism with socialism and that if we want to establish socialism in our country, why not form ourselves into an independent group outside the Congress and act independently of its policy; and be at the same time liberated from the reactionary influences of a lower-middle class organisation.

The answer is that we do not wish to isolate ourselves from the great national movement against British imperialism which today the Congress symbolises. We admit that the Congress today has defects and shortcomings, yet it can easily be the greatest revolutionary force in the country. We should not forget that the present stage of the Indian struggle is that of the bourgeois democratic revolution and, therefore, it would be a suicidal policy for us to cut ourselves off from the national movement that the Congress undoubtedly represents. The one great quality of a true Marxist is that he is not a dogmatic or sectarian in his attitude. The dialectical method is a living method of great elasticity; and one who follows it, has to adapt himself to the changing situation.

It does not, however, mean that he is an opportunist or that he is ready to compromise his principles. The truth is that he never loses sight of the ultimate goal but knows the limitations and the possibilities of a particular situation and he will not sacrifice the gains thereof merely for the sake of a doctrine or a dogma, if those gains are an inevitable stage to be reached on

*Text of the Presidential Address at the First Session of the All-India Congress Socialist Conference, held at Patna on May 17, 1934

the way of socialism. He will never refuse to join fight for independence carried on by the lower-middle class if he can thereby overthrow foreign domination. He will, no doubt, if circumstances are favourable, try to establish a Socialist State but if the objective situation is not ripe for such an event, he will not for that reason frustrate the cause of freedom by refusing to fight the alien power in collaboration with other classes. His conduct will be quite consistent with the principles he professes, because for a subject nation political independence is an inevitable stage on the way to socialism, even though we believe that in the present Indian conditions, the probability is that both the revolutions may be carried out simultaneously.

But in these matters there cannot be any certainty. Much would depend upon the quality of the leadership of the freedom movement. If the leadership is imbued with socialist ideology, if it is endowed with political vision and can act boldly, it will certainly take advantage of the situation if it happens to be favourable. But whether or not socialism will be established in our country simultaneously with the winning of freedom cannot be categorically answered. Capitalist democracy is any day preferable to serfdom and subjection to an alien rule. And he will be a short-sighted and a very narrow socialist who will refuse to take part in a national struggle simply on the ground that the struggle is being principally conducted by the petty bourgeois elements of society although he will make ceaseless efforts to give it a socialist direction. In the peculiar conditions of India, the socialist can very well work within the Congress and combine the national struggle with Socialism.

WHAT ABOUT CLASS WAR ?

The charge will be levelled against us that by preaching the theory of class struggle we shall be promoting class war. It will be said that weak and disunited as we are, it is all the more necessary that we should try to unite all classes and communities in one big common effort to win freedom, and that a united front should be presented to the enemy. It will be said that we would alienate the sympathy and goodwill of certain classes by preaching the gospel of socialism at this critical juncture in our history. Some will advise us to postpone it for a future unknown date and in the meantime to concentrate all our efforts on winning political freedom. We do not question the sincerity of those who offer this advice to us and who appear to be very solicitous about preserving social peace.

But I fail to understand, why these friends object to any efforts being made for making the oppressed classes self-conscious. Our critics conveniently forget that the upper classes who wield economic power in the country and have existing social conditions in their favour need not be

class-conscious, because it is only in this way that they can really feel that they are defending not their class-interest but the interests of the whole society. The social basis being very narrow they really feel stronger by entertaining the belief that they are acting in the interests of society as a whole. Yet, as a matter of fact class solidarity, is there and you can see it awakened when an attack is made on their prerogatives and privileges in society. They all combine together in repelling the attack. But the oppressed classes of society, who have to win power, cannot afford to be consciously altruistic and they need to be class-conscious. because without developing a sense of class-solidarity, it is not possible for them to have an effective organisation which alone can win power for them.

As for the plea of unity, I say that unity is of value only if it generates power, but this is possible only when two groups which are to unite together on a common platform subscribe to the same ideal and methods of work. In the contrary case, such unity can only bring weakness and demoralisation to both parties. As a matter of fact the process of intensive differentiation amongst the various classes of society has been going on in the country with greater and greater rapidity, cutting off more and more layers of the upper and middle classes from the national movement. New classes are being formed and are being separated from the great mass of the people. Efforts are being made by the Government to fortify its position by bringing into prominence the reactionary forces of the country such as the princes, the big landlords and the communalists, and by arraying these forces and its new allies against the national movement. This has been the basic policy of British rule in India from the very beginning. It is forming alliances with Indian capitalists by offering them a junior partnership in the big concern of British imperialism. In these circumstances is it not meaningless to talk of unity ?

Instead of wailing over unity for which no basis exists, it is our duty to find out methods that will intensify the national struggle which has so far been a predominantly middle class movement. I feel that the only way to do it is to broaden the basis of the movement by organising the masses on an economic and class-conscious basis.

ORGANISATION

The two instruments which can make a class self-conscious are propaganda and organisation. The peasants are notorious all the world over for their incapacity to organise themselves and to develop common understanding. Left to themselves, they can only lodge their protest by spontaneous peasant rising when conditions become unbearable. This has been the case in Ireland and Russia, and India is no exception. The history

of British rule in India is full of such risings whenever drastic changes were introduced by the Government in the landed system of the country and when the village community was being destroyed. Conscious efforts for propaganda and organisation were made in these countries only when high-souled and selfless individuals took up their cause or when the national movement, being compelled by the necessity of widening its social basis, turned towards them. These ignorant people, trampled upon by tyranny and sunk deep in superstition, know only one way out and that is to rush headlong into riotous conduct, and then the Government makes sort shrift of them. It is only the revolutionary intelligentsia that can organise them for disciplined action.

THE MASSES ARE IMPORTANT

The masses are the class of the future. The Russian experiment is slowly though surely helping the masses to take the centre of the world stage. The needs of the Indian democratic movement also require an alliance between the lower-middle class and the masses. We are being irresistibly driven to widening the social base of our national movement by formulating economic policies for the welfare of the masses. Socialism is in the air. We cannot escape it. A new school of thought has come into existence and has come none too soon. In the days to come, the Congress shall more and more talk of radical economic programmes, just as the Government and the liberal politicians will more and more talk of planned economy and of measures for the uplift and welfare of the masses.

The Congress today may accept a socialist programme only in a mutilated form but the whole drive of the nation will be in that direction, because the responsibility for carrying on the struggle for national independence is more and more devolving upon the masses. Congressmen have so far been approaching the masses in the name of democracy and political freedom, but these high platitudes have never moved them out of their apathy and quiescence and the response accordingly has not been very satisfactory. These abstract ideas make no appeal to the masses because they have no meaning for them. They can, however, be made restive and class-conscious and can come into the arena of active warfare only when an economic appeal is made to them. Whenever they have arisen, their slogan has been removal of some specific grievances and not the slogan of liberty and equality.

THE ROLE OF LABOUR

The labour movement in India has out-grown its purely trade union

character. The working classes are slowly developing political consciousness and working class parties have already come into existence in some provinces while steps have been taken for the formation of an All-India Working Class Party. Indian labour is organising itself for the overthrow of capitalism and has decided to carry on an intensive agitation to resist all forms of imperialist and capitalist exploitation. The All-India Working Class Party has placed before itself the immediate task of achieving complete national independence from the standpoint of the working class. This has been defined to be the political objective of the working class in the platform of unity. It desires to place itself at the head of the national struggle and to act as its vanguard. It claims to lead the peasants as well whom it regards as a valuable ally in its struggle against imperialism and its Indian supporters. The demands which will serve as the basis of its agitation consist of a section of peasants' demands as well.

I recognise that the working class movement has yet to make much headway in this country. It is torn and split by internal dissensions. Opportunist leaders have caused division in its ranks and have misled the workers. Efficient revolutionary leadership is lacking and the organisation is imperfect. This is why the strike activities of the working class have so often been unsuccessful. Earnest efforts are being made, however, to achieve and to perfect unity of the organisation. A general strike of textile workers has been declared to secure their demands. If efforts for unity succeed and the right kind of leadership is available, the working class movement will soon grow into a mighty and powerful force.

THE ROLE OF THE CONGRESS

The Congress is the biggest political organisation in the country. It enjoys the confidence and affection of the masses and has built up a prestige for itself by a long record of public service. Our inheritance is certainly rich but we shall not be worthy of it, if we simply allow ourselves to relapse into constitutionalism and reformism or waste our opportunities by a policy of inaction. New conditions impose new tasks. The national struggle is coming more and more to be identified with the struggle of the oppressed classes, and a full recognition of this fact alone will enable us to formulate correct policies for the future. Just as the purely economic movement of the working class is irresistibly growing into a political movement, in the same way the purely political movement of the Congress is unconsciously developing into an economic movement for the masses. The economic struggle of the workers develops into the political struggle because they are quick to perceive that the imperialist Government takes the side of the capitalists and becomes their ally. In the same way, the leaders of the

political struggle are more and more coming to realise that the upper classes are making a united front with British imperialism against the national movement and are, therefore, being forced by the exigencies of the situation to enlist the sympathies of workers and peasants. The needs of the situation demand a new orientation of policy and outlook.

CO-ORDINATION OF FORCES REQUIRED

The struggle of the workers should be linked with the struggle of the Congress and through it with the struggle of peasants and the lower-middle class. It is only when they will all unite into one big effort that the battle will be won. All the forces that are working for the political independence of the country have to be co-ordinated with each other and this is possibly only when all come to possess the same ideals.

The working class has been very slightly touched by the Congress movement. We have generally kept them at an arm's length, and have as a rule not taken any interest in their struggle against Indian capitalists. This is why the big general strike of the textile workers of Bombay, one of the most notable events of the day, conducted so heroically and against such heavy odds, does not strike an average Congressman's imagination nor does it evoke our active sympathy. It seems to be no concern of this. On grounds of social justice alone they deserve the sympathy and support of the Congress. They are being thrown out of employment in large numbers, their wages are being reduced and their standard of living is being lowered. The least we could do was to raise a fund for their maintenance during the period of strike. But we do not think of these things because somehow or other we have come to feel that it is not for us to interest ourselves in industrial disputes. Is this the way to win the confidence of the workers? No wonder that working-class struggles have no organic connection with our movement. They take their own course, though it is a fact that the initiating a major struggle by them is a sure index of the coming political struggle in the country. All the great national struggles that have been conducted by the Congress have been preceded by strikes and other forms of industrial unrest. It is only when the two struggles have synchronised with each other that the national struggle has reached its highest water-mark. If the two forces could be consciously brought into relationship with each other, the struggle could be carried on with greater effectiveness and speed and for a much longer time. The objective situation in the country continues to be revolutionary, and if we had achieved co-ordination of forces, all the dejection and despair so conspicuous today, would not have come upon us.

One more advantage would have accrued to us as a result of such a

policy. In India where the labour force is drawn from villages and where the industrial worker remains a villager at heart the worker can act as a standard bearer of revolution in villages. The history of the peasants' movement in Russia reveals the interesting fact that the movement was strong specially in those places where the leaders had previously been workers, influenced by the propaganda in the towns. The Congress must come in line with the new thought that is convulsing the land. It is only in this way that we can link ourselves with the world forces that are moulding the new society that is to emerge from the bosom of the old.

The present world situation has a vital relation with our movement, particularly the socialist movement. It will not be, therefore, out of place to survey it briefly in order that we may better understand the character of our movement.

PROSPECTS OF INDUSTRIAL CIVILISATION

We are living in a world the economic foundations of which are crumbling before our eyes. The world economic crisis is deepening every day and no possible way out seems to be in sight. Various remedies have been suggested by orthodox economists and financiers to get over the crisis, while retaining the capitalist framework of society. The State Capitalism of President Roosevelt is being hailed with delight and he is coming to be regarded as the saviour of capitalist society. Various efforts are made to tide over the crisis by deliberately holding back industrial progress, by restricting output and by raising prices of commodities by artificial means. Who does not know that in the United States maize has been used as fuel and that cotton growers have been persuaded on payment of compensation to destroy ten million acres of crop? Who does not know that in order to maintain high prices and profits two million sacks of coffee were thrown into the sea in Brazil? In Germany millions of poods of rye have been used as pig fodder and every possible step is being taken to reduce the cropped area of other agricultural products. We must not forget that this is a crisis superficially of overproduction but really of goods and chronic maldistribution. The tragedy of the situation is that though productive powers of society have grown excessively, the purchasing power of the people has somehow vanished and million of workers and peasants have been ruined. Millions of workers have been thrown out of employment and those who still work have their wages reduced and their other social benefits taken away from them. This is the inevitable consequence of an economic system whose basis is exploitation and whose essential motive is profit-making.

Side by side with the intensification of the economic crisis, a political crisis is also growing acute. Parliamentary democracy, which is only the

political form of capitalist economy, has been similarly involved in a crisis. Representative institutions are crumbling on all sides, and doubts are being expressed as regards the ability of such institutions to provide a way out of the impasse. People are getting disillusioned and where there was once assurance and peace of mind, there is now unrest and uncertainty. Other social institutions so far regarded as sacred are being critically examined and their authority is being gradually undermined. In some states, even the pretence of democracy has been openly given up and in its place naked autocracy in the shape of Fascism has been enthroned. Other states while retaining outward forms of parliamentary democracy have assumed large dictatorial powers. Parliamentary governments have grown unstable and political parties and groups are being multiplied, thus making parliamentary government more and more difficult. Even the mother of parliaments has not been able to escape a constitutional crisis and a Fascist party has come into existence even in democratic England.

The decaying capitalist society is today engaged in a life and death struggle with the new order which is being born from within its womb. It is making all sorts of experiments and trying various expedients just to save itself from the impending catastrophe. It is preparing itself for the coming struggle and in the process it has to cast democracy to the winds and to buttress itself on the seemingly impregnable rock of open dictatorship. Italy and Germany have already gone fascist and it has to be seen whether other countries will or will not go the same way.

The question is as to why such a serious and unending crisis has overtaken the capitalist mode of production, when we know that it has hitherto been a beneficent force and a means of promoting the development of the productive powers of society. We now find that the period of phenomenal expansion of capitalism has suddenly ended. It is no longer possible for capitalists to create an illusion of growing democracy by conceding the demands of workers, by raising their standard of life and by continually extending the social services. Today they are constrained to reduce the cost of production by rationalisation and wage-cuts. They are launching an offensive against workers, not only by attacking their standard of living but also by limiting the rights which they formerly enjoyed.

CAPITALIST CRISIS EXPLAINED

This is because capitalism has reached the last stage in its development when it cannot but act as a fetter upon the effective use of available resources. This last phase in which capitalism finds itself is imperialism, which has been defined by Lenin as the monopoly stage of capitalism. Let

Lenin explain himself:

“Free competition is the fundamental property of capitalism and of commodity production generally. Monopoly is the direct opposite of free competition but we have seen the later being transformed into monopoly before our very eyes, creating large-scale production and squeezing out small-scale production, replacing large-scale production, finally leading to such a concentration of production and capital that monopoly has been established. The result is: cartels, syndicates and trusts, and merging with them, the capital of a dozen or so banks manipulating thousands of millions. And at the same time the monopolies, which have sprung from free competition, do not eliminate it, but exist alongside and over it, thereby giving rise to a number of very acute and bitter antagonisms, points of friction, and conflicts. Monopoly is the transition from capitalism to a higher order.” “When capitalism enters the stage of imperialism monopoly and finance capital becomes dominant, the export of capital acquires special importance and international monopoly combines of capitalists are formed which divide up the world.”

At this stage, capitalism becomes decadent and parasitic, anarchy reigns in social production and capitalism finds itself unable to find a market for the increased supply of goods which it is able to produce. The struggle between monopoly combines for markets, raw materials and foreign investment is intensified. The international competition rapidly develops and each group tries to reduce the cost of production to undersell the other. But for reducing the cost of production the wages have to be lowered, the standard of life of the workers has to be reduced, and millions of workers are necessarily thrown out of employment because of technical improvements effected by technocrats. The purchasing power of the masses, thus, reaches vanishing point and this in return largely reduces the demand for goods. This is the contradiction in which capitalism finds itself involved today. The contradiction is inherent in capitalism and as the crisis develops the contradiction is also sharpened. This leads to conflicts and antagonisms between capital and labour on the one hand and between imperialist countries on the other. War danger is looming large today. Efforts for world-peace and disarmament have again and again proved abortive. The prestige of the League of Nations is at its lowest ebb and peaceful solutions of political and economic rivalries are becoming more and more impossible. A regular race of armaments has begun, tariff wars are the order of the day, national jealousies and rivalries are growing apace and the stage is set for a new imperialist war.

On the other side, the struggle between capital and labour is being intensified. Working class organisations have been ruthlessly suppressed in certain countries and they are not allowed to have a political existence,

while in other countries there have been shootings and massacres of the workers. The rights of free speech and public assembly are being everywhere attacked and the right of strike is being narrowed down. What do these facts indicate? That capitalism has entered into a blind alley and does not know how to get out; that it is seeking a solution of the difficulty by having recourse of palliatives and temporary expedients by controlled capitalism or by fascism. As the danger increases the possibilities are that it will tend more and more towards fascism.

The antagonism between labour and capital, though temporarily put down and suppressed, will appear again with greater virulence and may lead to a successful revolution of workers.

THE WAY OUT

Socialists say that the only way out of the difficulty is the socialisation of the means of production. They say that production has been socialised though ownership of the means of production continues to be in private hands. And it is only when the means of production cease to be owned by a small class and come to be owned by society as a whole, that the inherent contradictions of capitalism can be resolved. Marx has said that when capitalism becomes a fetter on the power of production the stage is reached when it can be superseded by another order. He does not, however, mean to say that the new order will come into existence of itself. He only means to indicate the possibilities of a new order when such a situation arises. Of course in his opinion a socialist order is the most appropriate order for the new conditions, but it cannot be established unless men consciously work for it.

The other alternative which deserves serious consideration is fascism, because, both socialism and fascism claim to offer a permanent solution of the difficulty. It is these two ideas that will compete with each other in the future for victory, and on the result of their struggle the future destiny of mankind depends.

FASCISM

While judging fascism, I shall try as best I can to steer clear of prejudices that have been created against it. I shall not judge it by the reign of terror which fascists established when they assumed reins of power. The overthrow of parliamentary institutions, the suppression of all other political parties and organisations, the orgies of murders and pogroms against Jews are some of the accusations that are preferred against them. But we should not take these into account when forming an opinion of the

system which they claim to have established. They claim to have discovered a middle term between the capitalist and the communist order. They are hailed in capitalist circle as saviours of the world from the scourge of communism. There is no doubt that communism lies low in fascist countries today but who can say that the communists will not raise their heads again if fascism fails to fulfil its promises.

Much has been made of the fascist theory of the Corporate State. Some claim it to be "the greatest constructive achievement of the mind of man." It is said that "the Corporate State will prescribe the limits within which individual interests may operate. Those limits are the welfare of the nation. Within these limits, all activity is encouraged; individual enterprise, and the making of profit are not only permitted, but encouraged so long as that enterprise enriches, rather than damages by its activity the nation as a whole." This is unexceptionable. The question, however, is as to how it is proposed to achieve this purpose. May we enquire what instruments have been fashioned to secure the ends in view? Let us turn to the laws and decrees which established a Corporate State in Italy. On a study of these laws and decrees, we don't find much to justify the claim that has been made for it. They only impose compulsory arbitration for all labour disputes and set up labour tribunals for punishing withdrawal of labour by more than three workers. They also contemplate institution of joint committees of employers and workers to settle disputes. The Corporate State has not saved Italy from the economic crisis. It has not saved it from the curse of unemployment.

It is only fair to state that Italian fascism has some admirers also outside Italy. Paul Einzig who has examined the economic foundations of fascism both in Italy and Germany describes Italian fascism as constructive fascism and German fascism as destructive. He has, however, to admit that up to the present, fascist Italy has not adopted a managed economic system. But he says that "she has created suitable preliminary conditions for the change, and has actually made some progress towards it." The suitable preliminary conditions to which he refers are the discipline and the spirit of co-operation which, according to him are displayed by the Italian people. The Corporations, (the Corporations taken together from the Corporate State) though conceived as early as 1926, did not come into existence before 1933. Their function is said to be consultative and conciliatory. In this way they seem to be merely Conciliation Boards. The favourable opinions that have so far been given are generally based on the philosophy of Italian fascism as explained by its author and on the text of laws and decrees that have been published for establishing the Corporate State and not on any success that fascism has achieved.

The Nazi movement of Germany is another species of fascism, though

Mussolini, the original founder of fascism, does not accept the claim. The programme of the Nazis contained a few items of a socialist programme as well. The Nazi movement having its social foundation in the lower-middle class ruined by war and inflation naturally had to adopt a hostile attitude towards land owners and big enterprises. But Hitler, like Mussolini, had climbed to power with the help of big industrialists who were the principal financiers of the movement and they would not have done so, unless they had the assurance that they might use Hitler for their own ends. The policy of Hitler has accordingly been one of extreme reaction.

In the economic field his policy is of economic nationalism, but this policy is not suitable for Germany, because it is principally an exporting nation. It will certainly result in a sharp fall in the standard of living and will ultimately bring about disillusionment.

The lower middle class of Germany has joined hands with big capital in suppressing socialism. The lower-middle class is usually the follower of the upper-middle class and its chief ambition is to differentiate itself from the labourer. The small producer and the petty shopkeeper in Germany had been ruined by competition with large-scale producers and owners of big stores and this had caused a wide gulf between the two. Yet, the lower-middle class could not see its self-esteem wounded by association on equal terms with the proletariat. The capitalists and the workers had powerful organisations and occupied the centre of the stage, while the lower-middle class section of society was unorganised and overshadowed by others.

It remains to be seen how long this combination of the lower-middle class with the capitalists is going to last. Only partial and temporary remedies have been applied for reduction of unemployment. What will be the final outcome of fascism, it is difficult to say. It seems to be clear, however, that fascism is only attempting to suppress the contradictions created by capitalism without attempting to remove the causes of those contradictions. The final issues will largely depend on the capacity of the fascist state to keep under control disintegrating forces working within capitalism.

SOCIALISM THE ONLY WAY OUT

If fascism is rejected, socialism alone holds the field. It is no longer a mere principle and dogma, but is being translated into action, at least in one country. The Russian experiment is going on before our eyes and we can study the experiment and form our own conclusions. Russia is the only land without unemployment. The great merits of its planned economy are being freely recognised even by capitalists, who have borrowed the idea from Russia for application to their capitalist economy. Factories, land, transport and credit system have been socialised, the collectivisation of

farming is taking place. In place of anarchy we have planned guidance of economic development. The foundation of a socialist economy had been well laid. The level of production is being continually raised and with it the standard of life of the masses. The first Five-Year Plan had a tremendous success and the second plan is being accomplished.

The fact that the Soviet State is progressing rapidly despite the hostility of an antagonistic world, and even in the midst of widespread economic crisis, is in itself a proof positive that it has a message to give. It is not necessary that other countries should traverse all the stages Russia has passed through nor is it necessary that we should implicitly follow the Soviet plans in every little detail. The policies can only be adjudged with reference to the particular circumstances of each case but it is also clear that the Russian experiment has undoubtedly much to teach and has facilitated the task of others who may have to embark upon the socialist experiment.

As G.D.H. Cole has beautifully put it "Industrialisation has become too productive to be consistent with oligarchy; socialism is the indispensable system for the age of plenty." When the profit-motive is eliminated, all the institutions are reshaped and society produces not for profits but for use. The state organises production and distribution according to a plan. 'To each according to his needs' is the ultimate principle in the distribution of the social product, but it cannot be attained all at once.

SOME CURRENT MISCONCEPTIONS

I think it will not be out of place here, to remove some of the prevalent misconceptions about socialism. Socialism has been much misunderstood not only by its opponents but also by its followers. Many of the misconceptions will not arise if we remember that we are dealing with scientific and not utopian socialism. We are led to think that socialism in Russia is a perfect system and all our criticisms are made from that point of view. We would not have fallen into this error, if we had remembered that socialism cannot be established overnight and that it is a growing thing. It is also natural that in its initial stages it should bear the marks of the capitalist system from which it is emerging. I shall not try to answer the questions which are usually asked about conditions in Russia. But I shall certainly like to say a few words on the prevalent misunderstanding about just one or two matters connected with socialism

MATERIALISTIC CONCEPTION OF HISTORY

The 'materialistic conception of history' which is a very important

contribution of Marx has been misunderstood. Owing to the use of the word 'materialistic' in the expression, it has often been thought that scientific socialism as propounded by Marx must be a materialistic doctrine. People say that Marx has denied the existence of mind, that he had no respect for spiritual values and that he did not recognise the forces of ideas. It is said that Marx recognised only the supremacy of matter and regarded it as the only factor in the evolution of history. All these statements are incorrect. Marx recognises both, mind and matter, as formative forces in history. He regards man as an active agent who consciously shapes history. The determining power of man is fully recognised in his system, but according to him the mind of man acts on a given objective situation, which sets the limits within which it can act. Economic motives play a predominant part in history but it does not mean that there are no other causes at work. All that Marx means to say is that an idea can influence the course of history only when it realises itself in fact and thus becomes a thing. He has nowhere considered the question of the relative importance of mind and matter. Both are equally important. Man cannot create anything independently of the objective situation, nor can a given objective situation by itself produce a result desired by man without his active participation. He only used the expression to distinguish his method from the idealism of Hegel who denied the reality of the world of experience and only recognised one Absolute Idea.

Marx does hold that many causes operate in the evolution of history. Legal and political systems, though derived from the methods of production, subsequently become independent forces in themselves with a power to influence the course of history. Marx has always held that what was originally derivative had the power of becoming an independent cause. Therefore, it is wrong to say that Marx recognised only one single cause of historical evolution.

PERFECTIONIST CRITICISM

Again, through the influence of utopian socialism, men have come to associate with socialism the existence of ideal conditions in every sphere of life and when the present conditions in Russia are not found to conform to the imaginary norm, the cry is raised that the socialist experiment is not proving successful. But the founders of scientific socialism never claimed any such thing for it. They simply affirmed that it is only after the socialist revolution is completed that for the first time in history, man leaves the conditions of animal existence behind him and acts as a human being. They knew quite well that human nature could not be transformed in a single day. But it is undoubted that with the advent of socialism, man enters into a new plane of existence. Men will certainly not be converted

into angels in a Socialist State. But it is also certain that human character will attain a much higher level because the limitations set by the present day acquisitive society would have disappeared.

ECONOMIC EQUALITY

Again, it is said that socialism has not been established in Russia because there is no equality there. But one has never said that in a Socialist State all men will be identical in every respect. In the sphere of distribution a socialist's ultimate goal is 'to every man according to his needs.' Marx has thus explained his idea of equality. He says:—

One man will excel another physically or intellectually and so contribute in the same time more labour, or can labour for a longer time .. Further, one worker is married, another single; one has more children than another, and so on. Given an equal capacity for labour and thence an equal share in the funds for social consumption, he one will in practice receive more than the other, the one will be richer than the other and so on. The proletarian slogan of equality had reference to the capitalist society and was only a demand for abolition of classes just as the cry of equality of the new capitalist society of the French Revolution had reference to the abolition of feudal privileges. The real content of the proletarian demand for equality is the demand for the abolition of classes Any demand for equality which goes beyond that is necessarily passes into absurdity.

INDIA IS NOT EUROPE

The critic may say that he admits that socialism is a good thing and that so far as Europe is concerned he further admits that socialism is the one system which will supersede capitalism. But what are the reasons to believe that Indian conditions can ever be ripe for socialism so long as the country remains a predominantly agricultural country? The argument is that as the internal development of India is not of a capitalistic character, socialism has no chance of success here. This argument held good in the days when countries were independent of economic units but since capitalism has entered the stage of imperialism, this is no longer so. They have now become links of a single chain called world economy. It is now necessary to take into account the existence of objective conditions for revolution throughout the whole system of imperialist world economy, which forms an integral unit, for the existence within this system of some countries that are not sufficiently developed from the industrial point of view, cannot form an insurmountable obstacle to revolution, if the system as a whole has become ripe for it.

In this state of affairs revolution will break out first not in countries where industry is most developed, but where the chain of imperialism is weak. It is, therefore, possible that the country where the chain is first broken, may be less developed from the industrial point of view.

This is why revolution took place in Russia. The chain of imperialism was weaker and the masses were oppressed and were in a desperate condition.

A socialist revolution has every chance of breaking out first in a country where the masses have been ruined by economic exploitation, even though the country is not sufficiently developed industrially, if a revolutionary situation is present. India does satisfy all these conditions and as the crisis developed, the conditions become worse. It is true that in a less developed country the period of transition is much longer. But it is also true that such country may have a revolution sooner under the stress of imperialistic oppression.

SOCIALISM IN INDIA

Socialism has come to stay in this country and is daily gaining in strength and prestige inside the Congress as well as in the country. The social foundation of this new school of thought which has appeared within the Congress is the democratic intelligentsia. Outside the Congress among its adherents are representatives of workers and to much smaller extent peasants, who constitute the real revolutionary elements of an anti-imperialistic struggle. As a matter of fact the working class is the vanguard while the peasants and the intelligentsia are only its auxiliaries. Most of us today within the Congress are only intellectual socialists, but as our long association with the national struggle has repeatedly brought us into intimate contact with the masses, there seems to be no danger of our degenerating into mere theorists and doctrinaires. We should try to broaden the social basis of our movement by bringing into our fold workers and peasants. I hope we will not rest satisfied with initiating the educated classes into the mysteries of socialist thought.

I do not belittle the importance of the formation of socialist study circles and the creation of a body of socialist literature in Indian languages. That is a good job and most essential too. But we must not forget that the real task before us is the political education of the masses, by carrying on day-do-day agitation amongst them on economic issues and by making them politically conscious. It is only by working amongst the masses that we can emancipate ourselves from reactionary influences and shall be able to develop proletarian outlook. The great mistake that we members of the intellectual classes are apt to commit is to relegate the people to the

background. The truth is that we are always willing to teach the masses but never to learn from them. This attitude of mind is wrong. We should try to understand them and to act as faithful interpreters of their desires and needs. Alexander Herzen has truly said that one can only work upon men by seeing their dreams more clearly than they see themselves. We shall profit by this new experience and shall be able to straighten out many of the twists in the process of our thought and shall give our philosophy of life that realistic touch which is so essential for a revolutionary movement. Above all, we should not forget that action should be our watchword, that it is only the struggle that can increase the drawing power of the movement. "It would not be possible," wrote Lenin, "to draw in any way the wide masses, of the exploited into the revolutionary movement, did not see examples before them of how the wage workers of the different sections of the industry compelled the capitalists to immediate swift improvement of their conditions." It is, therefore, necessary that we should join the existing organisations of peasants and workers and start new one where necessary.

We can perform the task before us only if we try to comprehend the principles and purposes of socialism and to understand the dialectical method propounded by Marx for the correct understanding of the situation and made that understanding the basis of true action. Above all, we should avoid dogmatism and sectarianism. We must take our stand on scientific socialism and steer clear of utopian socialism or social reformism. We can in no case allow ourselves to be satisfied with superficial modifications in the present day arrangements. Nothing short of a revolutionary transformation of the existing social order can meet the needs of the situation. We should try to build up a disciplined party which knows what it wants and how it can get what it wants, which does not only know how to destroy but also know how to construct. Without a clear conception of the objectives and methods, success is impossible.

ALL-INDIA CONGRESS SOCIALIST PARTY

The question of the formation of an All-India Congress Socialist Party will also engage our attention. In my humble opinion sufficient ground has not yet been prepared to enable us to take this step today. Accordingly, I favour the proposal of the Bihar Socialist group that an Organising Committee be appointed with regional secretaries who should prepare the ground for an All-India Organisation. So far as I know, only three or four provincial groups exist within the Congress at present. The Bihar Socialist Party was formed in 1931 but it could not function because the national struggle intervened. The Bombay group was formed only last year some time after the Poona Conference. I know that a strong body of socialist

opinion exists in the United Provinces. But no formal step has yet been taken to form a socialist group in the province. A local group has of course been quite recently formed in Benares. Papers report that Delhi also has a socialist group to its credit. I have no information about other provinces. The first step in the organisation is the formation of provincial and local groups. This spade work should take much of our time and it will be the duty of the Organising Committee to see that the process is speeded up. I hope it will be possible for us to form the party at the time when the next Congress meets.

CONGRESS MUST MEET

We are all of opinion that a special session of the Congress should be summoned to review the whole situation and to frame the programme of work for the future. It is encouraging to note that this opinion is also shared by a large number of provincial workers of different provinces. And this is as it should be, because the present AICC which was elected in 1931 cannot be expected to reflect faithfully the opinion of the rank and file of today. But I do not think that we shall be justified in insisting that the question of Council-entry should be considered only by a full session of the Congress. I know that the Congress alone can take a final decision in the matter. But cannot the AICC be permitted to decide the matter provisionally, its decision, of course, subject to ratification by the Congress?

THE SWARAJ PARTY

But the principal question to be considered by us is quite different and that is the question of Swaraj Party's position vis-a-vis the Congress. Shall it be a distinct organisation, forming an independent unit of the Congress organisation like the AISA and functioning as an autonomous parliamentary section of the Congress or shall it be a body acting under the control and discipline of the Congress and not only under the general supervision of the working Committee of the Congress, as has been proposed by the leaders of the Swaraj Party? I want to examine the question only on broad rounds of policy and expediency. I have a genuine fear that being deprived of the healthy influence of the revolutionary movement, the autonomous Swarajist organisation will in course of time become a **pacca** constitutional and reformist body and will develop a mentality which will run counter to the revolutionary policy of the Congress. Let it be remembered that the policy which has been adumbrated by the new Swaraj Party is quite different in spirit from that of its namesake which is associated with the hallowed names of C.R. Das and Pt. Motilal Nehru. They had outlined a

policy of consistent opposition from within the legislatures and they had decided against acceptance of office.

The new Swaraj Party has, however, not enunciated any such policy. Obviously the framers of the present policy have not allowed themselves to be guided by their predecessors. It is admittedly a reformist body. It has no obstructive tactics to its credit. It is silent on the most important question of acceptance of office. It is difficult to distinguish its programme and policy from those of the liberals. Their programme mainly consists of legislative work. It is true that the party proposes to carry out the constructive programme of the Congress and to work for village organisation. It is difficult to understand what the authors of the programme mean by this last item. Do they mean to undertake welfare work in villages and to organise model villages as the Government are doing in some parts of the country? Or, do they propose to revive the institution of village communities? It is significant to note that just like the Congress they fight shy of the labourers. They will establish agencies for foreign propaganda. But what agencies are they going to set up in the country outside legislatures and local bodies in order to enforce the national demand? The Constituent Assembly which they propose to convene in order to formulate the national demand, seems to be only another edition of the liquidated All-Parties' Conference. The central ideas of the plan which Jawaharlal Nehru had in his mind when he sponsored the democratic demand of the Constituent Assembly was absolutely different. While retaining the name, our Swarajist friends have vulgarised the whole thing. I think it will be injurious to the best interest of the Congress to allow the establishment of an out-and-out reformist party within the Congress, unless it is willing to function as an integral part of the Congress organisation and subject to its discipline.

THE IMMEDIATE TASK

We assemble here on a rather critical occasion. The AICC is meeting tomorrow after years. You have to decide what proposals should be placed before it on behalf of the socialist movement within the Congress. We have to devise ways and means to resuscitate and reinvigorate the Congress. I know it is not such an easy task.

I know today we are demoralised and dejected. A defeatist mentality has overtaken the Congress. But in my humble opinion, there is no cause for dejection. It is true that national freedom is not in sight but there is no doubt of the fact that there has been powerful invigoration of the struggle for national emancipation. And it is no small gain that we have not entered into any compromise with British imperialism. We have made to

surrender and the banner of the Congress has not been lowered. Mahatma has remained intransigent, though he has cleared the path for others by advising a halt. Above all, we should remember that no true effort is ever lost. In the words of Lenin, unselfish devotion to the revolution and the appeal to people with a revolutionary faith are not in vain, even when many scores of years divide the sowing from the harvest.

It is obvious that we cannot remain content with the constructive programme of the Congress alone. All honour to those who wish to engage in such activities. But we cannot delude ourselves into the false belief that such activities will by themselves lead to mass action. Nor can we subscribe to the policy of reformism and constitutionalism which the new Swarajist wing of the Congress is going to pursue. The policy of alternating between direct action in a revolutionary situation and constructive or legislative work, according to one's temperament, in a period of reaction, does not commend itself to us. The situation continues to be revolutionary. The industrial crisis is not over and there are no sign of a return to industrial prosperity. The agrarian crisis in India is also deepening. And the measures contemplated by the Government—the regulation of production with a view to adjust it to demand and other legislative proposals—would not do. Given proper leadership, therefore, we should carry the masses with us and march from victory to victory. Equipped with a socialist ideology and immersed in the work of making the masses economically conscious and politically organised. We can, with confidence, look forward to the future and hope in the fullness of time to lead the organised masses of India to freedom and full manhood. The next revolutionary wave will be much bigger and mightier. And let me assure you, it is not as distant as some people think.

The process of differentiation is growing apace. The lure of the coming reforms has imbued with imperialist hues a section of the upper classes. In the new imperialist framework foreshadowed in the White Paper they hope to find ample satisfaction of all that they can legitimately desire. This army of deserters is likely to grow in other ways also. Let us open our ranks to fresh recruits, powerful recruits—the workers and peasants of India. This we can only do if we fervently and persistently agitate within the Congress for the adoption of an economic programme with a view to socialise the nationalist struggle. Only by so doing shall we make India ripe for democracy.

*Democracy and Freedom**

We are meeting after nine years and during this period profound changes have taken place all over the world. The World War has considerably weakened British Imperialism and national liberation movements of colonial peoples have reached immense heights. The national and revolutionary consciousness of the masses is rapidly maturing. In our own country mass activity on an unprecedented scale is visible though unfortunately it is sometimes directed into wrong and unhealthy channels under the influence of reactionary leadership and thus does immense harm to progressive movements. But all this shows that masses have been aroused to action as they were never before and if reactionary leadership is dethroned from its present position of power and influence, masses can be led into revolutionary battles.

There is disequilibrium not only in international relations but in each country also class equilibrium has been disturbed. Large sections of the lower middle class have been economically ruined and for the first time they have taken recourse to the weapon of strike in order to enforce their demands. Europe has been the worst sufferer of the war. Its economy has been shattered. The social basis of parties is changing and old bourgeois liberal parties have lost much of their former influence. Socialist and Communist parties have gained in strength and a new Catholic Party representing backward sections of the community has emerged on the scene.

In the light of the experiences gained during the last nine years and in view of the profound changes that have taken place both in India and abroad as a result of the war, we have to re-define our policy. Capitalism has failed to resolve any of its inherent contradictions and all efforts to stabilise it are bound to fail. The Big Four have not been able to solve the problem of peace. Preparations for a new world conflict have already begun and a re-alignment of powers has taken place. Though for the

*Welcome Address delivered by Acharya Narendra Deva, Chairman of the Reception Committee of Fifth Annual CSP Conference held at Kanpur from February 24 to March 2, 1947.

moment every country is exhausted and stands sorely in need of a period of rest and recuperation and the people everywhere are clamouring for bread and peace, yet leaders of States are again on their old nefarious game.

The contradictions of capitalism are such that conflicts and antagonisms of powers will, sooner or later, come out into the open. Foundations of society have been rudely shaken and the old governing class no longer knows how to govern in the changed conditions. It is unable to adjust itself to new conditions and it lacks the vision and the ability to rebuild society on new foundations. It is becoming clear every day that unless extant property relations are transformed there can be no permanent peace in the world. A new era is ushering in and the hour of fulfilment for socialism seems to have arrived. But still there are some formidable obstacles in our way which have to be surmounted before the world can reach the goal. In the ideological field we have to contend with the view that socialism is incompatible with democracy. Some have gone so far as to say that Socialism is the road to serfdom. A British economist propounds the view that individual freedom can be retained only in a Society where economic life is untrammelled and free from State control. He is a supporter of free enterprise and as Socialism stands for planned production and consumption, his contention is that in such a system essential freedoms cannot be preserved. Distortion of socialism in Soviet Russia resulting in the absence of political freedom has also fostered a belief that planned economy inevitably leads to bureaucratisation and totalitarcanism.

It is unfortunate that the Russian system is regarded as model of what Socialism would be and that all criticism is based on this assumption. Those whose faith in communism has been rudely shaken by political and social conditions in Russia and who are now giving the primacy to individual freedom and human rights generally attribute this state of affairs to the machinations of the Stalinist group. While there are others who go deeper into the matter and hold the view that, under planning, individual freedom will be jeopardised. There is an element of truth in both these view-points but, by introducing democratic techniques, the danger can be averted. There is nothing inherent in planning which may constitute a grave danger to human rights. Economy of a State can be so planned as to minimise to the maximum the risks involved in such a process. Projection of democracy outside the State, decentralisation of economy, establishment of non-official corporations for running of certain industries and control of independent working class organisations over the economic life of society are some of the measures that may be suggested for averting the danger.

Besides, there is one more reason why communism has fallen into disrepute. The conduct of the Communist Party, its intrigues and double-dealings, its rank opportunism and its total disregard of moral

considerations in its dealings with others, have brought a bad name for socialism. Whenever a communist party has formed a common front with other political parties, it has done so for its own advantage and whenever it has sought affiliation to another organisation, it has done so with the intention of capturing or wrecking it. One finds it difficult to keep pace with the ever-occurring curious shifts in their policy and tactics. The truth must be stated that unprincipled action of Communist parties and their dual morality have done immense harm to the cause of socialism. And I have no doubt in my mind that, if their standard of behaviour had been different, left unity would have been possible.

It is a noteworthy fact that although today the Communists advocate democracy yet it seems that it is only a tactics to gain temporary advantages. That they are not sincere in their professions is proved by the fact that they do nothing in Soviet Russia to give political freedom to the people. The well-known Bulgarian Communist, Dimitrov, does not conceal from his Party that it is only a disguise to serve some other ends. His words are "For the moment the Communist Party must disguise itself as an ordinary democratic Party. Any Communists who are troubled by this duality of outlook are either not Marxists or they are provocateurs." In view of this statement how can non-communists be expected to collaborate with them?

In order to fight fascism and the danger of war, the world communists had to form people's fronts on the common basis of democracy and freedom. During the period of war, communists in the resistance movement in Europe did not talk of communism in their programme. Their sole emphasis was on democracy. Vast masses of people were mobilised in the name of freedom and democracy to fight fascism and when the war has been won and fascist powers have collapsed it stands to reason that we should realise the immense potentialities of these noble concepts and should make it unequivocally clear that we stand for democratic socialism.

So far as the Congress Socialists are concerned, we have always stood for democracy and freedom. We have always held it as an axiom that Socialism alone is full democracy and that it is a philosophy which insists on the free development of human personality as much as on economic freedom. Though always an admirer of Soviet Russia for its many achievements in various field of human activity, I have been a friendly critic and have noted with regret that it has been apathetic to the problem of political freedom.

Those who hold that Marx's teachings run counter to democracy are mistaken. Marx was one of the great humanists of his time. He cherished the right of freedom of expression as the most sacred of human possessions. His passionate advocacy of the freedom of the individual is well-known. His communism presupposed complete democracy. It was for this reason

that he cherished the belief that in democratic England and America Socialism could be achieved without recourse to violence. He held that control exercised by competition and property over human beings was the root of all evil. Engels defined Communism to be the doctrine of the requisites for the emancipation of the proletariat. Surely Marx and Engels could not advocate a Socialism which, while providing employment for the people, would enslave the masses and take away their essential freedoms.

According to Marx the feudal and capitalist stages of human evolution had dehumanised the individual and that proletarian revolution alone would restore his lost integrity. He was of the opinion that the proletariat was the representative of humanity and that his victory would be the triumph of the idea of humanity. In his scheme of things he placed the social man in the centre. The following passage from the *Cologne Communist Trial Number* of the Communist Journal, the mouthpiece of the Communist League, founded by Marx, is illuminating, (September 1847): —

"We are not among those communists who are out to destroy personal liberty, who wish to turn the world into a huge barrack or into a gigantic workhouse. There are some communists who, with an easy conscience, refuse to countenance personal liberty and would like to shuffle it out of the world because they consider that it is a hindrance to complete harmony. But we are convinced that in no social order will complete freedom be assured as in a Society based upon communal ownership."

It may be asked that when Marx stood for freedom and democracy why he talked of dictatorship of the proletariat. We must remember that he envisaged such a dictatorship only for those countries where democratic institutions and traditions were not firmly established and where the Capitalist class would at once bring into operation against the opposing forces all the military apparatus of the State. Again, this dictatorship was conceived for a short period only and it was the democratic dictatorship of the toiling masses and not of any particular Party.

MARXIST PHILOSOPHY

It was not to cancel the good work that capitalist democracy had done by way of ensuring personal liberty but to make that democracy and freedom complete and available for the common man that Marxist philosophy was born. Marx castigated the economic man of the 19th century as inhuman and brutal because the capitalist system had reduced the common man to the position of a serf and a chattel.

The concept of democracy that is associated with the rise of capitalism was incomplete as it was confined only to the political field. From the

beginning of the 20th century, however, it was gradually extended and came to embrace economic democracy as well. It was necessary for the communists to show the inadequacies of the capitalist concept of democracy but it was a grave mistake on their part to undermine all respect for the liberal tradition. By their propaganda they weakened the hold of democratic institutions. The communists thus helped in the destruction of the liberal tradition which at a later stage was equally assailed by fascists and made the path clear for the advent of fascism. And for this grave error Socialism had to pay a heavy price. The phenomenal rise of fascism in Germany and growth of fascist ideology all over the world became a serious menace to all human progress, let alone Socialism.

I have taken the liberty of stating my views only on this one question of democracy *versus* Socialism as it is a fundamental question today. We have to reaffirm our faith in democracy and freedom. The necessity for such an affirmation is greatest today because if the last war has proved anything it is this that the common man, after having secured for himself employment and good conditions of work, will surely demand freedom and democracy for himself in order that he may develop himself to the fullest extent.

The Conference will of course adopt a clear statement of policy and will define the organisational tasks of the Party.

UNITY OF LEFT

There is one more matter to which I would like to advert before I conclude. To-day a demand has been made by certain parties that the left should unite. They ask the left parties to come together and form a united front. There is no doubt that a union of all the revolutionary and socialist forces, if realised, would constitute an indomitable force against reaction. But, unhappily, for reasons well-known and which have been briefly hinted above, such a collaboration does not seem possible in the near future. We, the Congress Socialists, have tried our best to achieve socialist unity in this country at a great cost to ourselves and we have discovered at last that we were pursuing a mirage and that those who expressed their eagerness to unite wanted to do so only for party advantage and not with a view to strengthening the movement. Strangely enough, this is not a phenomenon peculiar to India. Left disunity is a universal malady. There must be something seriously wrong in the communist code of behaviour and in their tactics which is responsible for so much disunity in the ranks of Socialists. Unless they are radically altered there seems to be very little hope for unity anywhere. I would like to present the following passage from the organ of the *Communist League* (September 1847) to all the leftists and specially to communists:—

“Here we have only to address a few words to those proletarians who belong to other political or social parties. We are all of us out to fight extant society, because it oppresses us and allows us to rot in poverty and wretchedness. Instead of realising this and uniting our ranks, we are prone, alas, to squabble among ourselves, to fight with one another, much to the delight of our oppressors. Instead of, like one man, putting our hands to the work in order to establish a democratic State wherein each party would be able by word or in writing to win a majority over to its ideas, we wrangle one with another as to what will or what will not happen when once we have been victorious.”

If we are to achieve solidarity, the spokesmen of the various parties must cease their bitter attacks upon those who hold other views and must put an end to the abuse showered upon the adherents of opposing theories.

*Socialism Redefined**

Socialism seeks to establish a classless society. Socialism wants to restructure society in such a way as to bring to an end the mutually opposite interests of the various classes consisting of the exploiters and the exploited and the tyrant and the tyrannized. And thus society may become a collection of co-operative individuals in which the advancement of one member may naturally mean the advancement of the others, so that all members may collectively lead a life directed towards common progress.

Human history has forever been characterised by the struggle between the exploiting and the exploited classes. Man has always been an instrument of the laws of social progress; he has not been able to give a conscious direction to the evolution of society. Socialism wants to create a free and unexploitative social order in which men may rise above his state of helplessness and be able to direct the evolution of society. Thus according to Karl Marx socialism aims at leading men "from the realm of necessity to the realm of freedom."

Socialism wants to free the world and to remove all social obstacles to the development of individuality. Socialism aims at fostering real liberty, equality and fraternity through the creation of an exploitation-free society and by removing the present state of slavery, inequality and intolerance. Surely, liberty, equality and fraternity are old ideals. In fact these expressions constituted the bannerheadlines of all movements for social freedom even in ancient times. They also constituted the guiding principles of the great French revolution which happened to metamorphose the history of Europe. However, it is apparent that inequality has not been removed in spite of the success of the French Revolution. As a matter of fact these evils have become more widespread in present society.

THE FRENCH REVOLUTION

Now the question may be asked how the French revolution could be regarded a success while slavery, inequality and intolerance continue to

*From *Rashtriya aur Samajvad*, Banaras, 1950. English translation.

dominate present-day society. An adequate answer to this question would require a proper understanding of the character of liberty and equality, etc. The ideals of equality etc. are not absolute and unchanging. Their meaning tends to change under changing circumstances. The objective of the French revolution was to remove those inequalities which were a hindrance to the rise of Capitalism. Today our goal is to remove those inequalities and obstacles which have arisen as a result of the expansion of Capitalism and which are obstructing the powers of production from advancing further.

On account of the international character of capitalism the Capitalists are in the ascendent all over the world today. The capitalists have taken the place of the feudal barons of the past. And all the world's wealth has been concentrated in the hands of a few capitalists. The business magnates of London keep the economic reins of the entire British empire in their hands. Similarly about two hundred millionaire families rule over the destinies of the entire French population. It is the same in other places too. Apparently a very nation is mainly divided in two parts consisting of the exploiters and the exploited. On the one hand there are a handful of capitalists—the favourite sons of Mammon as it were—living in fine places and wallowing in all the luxuries of the world. They rule over the destinies of society and control all the means of production and distribution. On the other hand there is the unfortunate majority of the exploited whose sole property consists of their labour and who produce all the goods of society through hard labour. But they are ill-fed and ill-clad. And it is their lot to remain forever dependent on the generosity of the capitalists and to be ground down with exploitation.

Manifestly the exploiting and the exploited are equal before law—the laws meet our equal justice to all. Yet we are all aware how discriminatory is the justice meted out to the poor and how justice is a daily casualty in our courts of law. The capitalists monopolised all the positions of power in society on account of their class status. However much these capitalist rulers may try to be impartial, it is natural for their outlook to be pervaded by their class interest.

FREEDOM TO STARVE

It is maintained that freedom has been established in the world as a result of the capitalist democratic system. But for the working classes this freedom only means the freedom to surrender or in other words the freedom to starve. In fact, in the capitalist society of today the difficulties of life for the common man have grown manifold as compared to the feudal age. Surely that society too was divided between the rich and the poor. Nevertheless its conditions were unlike those prevailing under present day

capitalism, in which millions of toilers are starving while all the wealth is getting concentrated in the hands of a few. Moreover there is today a huge army of the unemployed in every country. And those who are employed do not get due remuneration for their work. Besides, they are always haunted by the fear that they might also be thrown among the unemployed any moment.

WHY THIS SUFFERING

Why is there so much suffering in society today? The reason for this suffering is that the capitalists own all the means of production, exchange and distribution. The workers in the mills, factories and banks have no control over the resources of these establishments. In ancient times, when the dominant form of production was the cottage industry, there was no large-scale production. In those time, the individual owned the means of production and he was able to derive substantial profits out of his produce. Nowadays production is organised on a large scale. But the means of production are owned by a handful of capitalists and not by society of the workers. In consequence, all the profits are pocketed by the capitalists and the workers barely get a subsistence wage.

In the long run, capitalism is injurious not only to society but also to the capitalists themselves. The majority of society is constituted of the workers and their purchasing power goes on diminishing day by day. As such, it becomes increasingly difficult for the capitalists to sell their products. Since the capitalist economy worked without a plan, it was always subject to periodic crisis. But as a result of the declining purchasing power of the workers this crisis has acquired a permanent character. Hence serious contradictions have cropped up in the powers of production, the means of production and the system of exchange. It is the goal of socialism to remove these contradictions. May be some people think that socialism will bring about complete freedom and equality. This is certainly a mistake. Socialism does not claim to bring about absolute equality, for even in socialist society there would be physical and intellectual differences. However socialism will certainly end all exploitation as also the economic basis for inequality, so that there will be equal opportunities for all.

*Socialism and Democracy**

The world-war has considerably weakened British imperialism and national liberation movements of colonial peoples have therefore reached immense heights. The national and revolutionary consciousness of the masses is rapidly maturing. In our own country, mass activity on an unprecedented scale is visible. But unfortunately, it is sometimes directed into wrong and unhealthy channels under the influence of reactionary leadership and thus does immense harm to progressive movements. But all this shows that the masses have been aroused to action as they were never before and if reactionary leadership is dethroned from its present position of power and influence, the masses can be led into revolutionary battles.

There is disequilibrium not only in international relations but in each country also class equilibrium has been disturbed. Large sections of the lower middle class have been economically ruined and for the first time they have taken recourse to the weapon of strikes in order to enforce their demands. Europe has been the worst sufferer of the war. Its economy has been shattered. The social basis of parties is changing and old bourgeois liberal parties have lost much of their former influence. Socialist and Communist parties have gained in strength and a new Catholic Party representing backward sections of the community has emerged on the scene.

In the light of the experience gained during the last nine years and in view of the profound changes that have taken place both in India and abroad as a result of the war, we have to redefine our policy. Capitalism has failed to resolve any of its inherent contradictions and all efforts to stabilise it are bound to fail. The Big Four have not been able to solve the problem of peace. Preparations for a new world conflict have already begun and realignment of powers has taken place. Though for the moment every country is exhausted and stands sorely in need of a period of rest and recuperation and the people everywhere are clamouring for bread and peace, the leaders of the State are again on their old nefarious game.

*From *Janata* (Bombay), 10 March, 1947.

The contradictions of capitalism are such that conflicts and antagonisms of powers will, sooner or later, come out into the open. Foundations of society have been rudely shaken and the old governing class no longer knows how to govern in the changed conditions. It is unable to adjust itself to new conditions and it lacks the vision and the ability to rebuild society on new foundations. It is becoming clear every day that unless extant property relations are transformed, there can be no permanent peace in the world. A new era is ushering in and the hour of fulfilment for socialism seems to have arrived. But still there are some formidable obstacles in our way which have to be surmounted before the world can reach the goal.

In the ideological field we have to contend with the view that socialism is incompatible with democracy. Some have gone so far to say that socialism is the road to serfdom. A British economist propounds the view that individual freedom can be retained only in a society where economic life is untrammelled and free from State control. He is a supporter of free enterprise, and as Socialism stands for planned production and consumption, his contention is that in such a system essential freedoms cannot be preserved. Distortion of socialism in Soviet Russia resulting in the absence of political freedom has also fostered a belief that planned economy inevitably leads to bureaucratisation and totalitarianism.

It is unfortunate that the Russian system is regarded as model of what socialism would be and that all criticisms have been rudely shaken by political and social conditions in Russia and those who are now giving the primacy to individual freedom and human rights generally attribute this state of affairs to the machination of the Stalinist group. While there are others who go deeper into the matter and who hold the view that, under planning, individual freedom will be jeopardised. There is an element of truth in both these viewpoints but, by introducing democratic techniques, the dangers can be averted. There is nothing inherent in planning which may constitute a grave danger to human rights. The economy of a State can be so planned as to minimise to the maximum the risks involved in such a process. Projection of democracy outside the State, decentralisation of economy, establishment of non-official corporations for running of certain industries and control of independent working class organisations over the economic life of society are some of the measures that may be suggested for averting the dangers.

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sought affiliation to another organisation, it has done so with the intention of capturing or wrecking it. One finds it difficult to keep pace with the ever-occurring curious shifts in their policy and tactics. The truth must be stated that unprincipled action of Communist parties and their dual morality have done immense harm to the cause of socialism. And I have no doubt in my mind that, if their standard of behaviour had been different, left unity would have been possible.

It is a noteworthy fact that although today they advocate democracy, it seems that it is only a tactics to gain temporary advantages. That they are not sincere in their profession is proved by the fact that they do nothing in Soviet Russia to give political freedom to the people. The well-known Bulgarian Communist, Dimitrov, does not conceal from his party that it is only a disguise to serve some other ends. His words are, "For the moment the Communist party must disguise itself as an ordinary democratic party. Any Communists who are troubled by this duality of outlook are either not Marxists or they are provocateurs". In view of this statement how can non-communists be expected to collaborate with them?

In order to fight fascism and the danger of war, the world communists had to form people's fronts on the common basis of democracy and freedom. During the period of war communists in the resistance movement in Europe did not talk of communism in their programme. Their sole emphasis was on democracy. The vast masses of people were mobilised in the name of freedom and democracy to fight fascism. When the war was won and fascist powers had collapsed, it stands to reason that we should realise the immense potentialities of those noble concepts and should make it unequivocally clear that we stand for democratic socialism.

So far as the Congress Socialists are concerned we have always stood for democracy and freedom. We have always held it as an axiom that socialism alone is full democracy and that it is a philosophy which insists on the free development of human personality as such as on economic freedom. Though always an admirer of Soviet Russia for its many achievements in various fields of human activities, we have been a friendly critic and have noted with regret that it has been apathetic to the problem of political freedom.

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root of all evils. Engels defined communism to be the doctrine of the requisites for the emancipation of the proletariat. Surely, Marx and Engels could not advocate a Socialism which, while providing employment for the people, would enslave the masses and take away their essential freedoms.

According to Marx the feudal and capitalist stages of human evolution had dehumanised the individual and that proletarian revolution alone would restore his lost integrity. He was of the opinion that the proletariat was the representative of humanity and that his victory would be the triumph of the idea of humanity. In his scheme of things he placed the social man in the centre. The following passage from the Cologne Communist Trial Number of the *Communist Journal*, the mouth-piece of the Communist League, founded by Marx, is illuminating, (September 1847) :

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It may be asked when Marx stood for freedom and democracy, why did he talk of the dictatorship of the proletariat? We must remember that he envisaged such a dictatorship only for those countries where democratic institutions and traditions were not firmly established and where the capitalist class would at once bring into operation against the opposing forces all the military apparatus of the State. Again, this dictatorship was conceived for a short period only and it was the democratic dictatorship of the toiling masses and not of any particular party.

It was not to cancel the good work that capitalist democracy had done by way of ensuring personal liberty but to make that democracy and freedom complete and available for the common man that Marxist philosophy was born. Marx castigated the economic man of the 19th century as inhuman and brutal because the capitalist system had reduced the common man to the position of a serf chattel.

The question of democracy *versus* socialism is a fundamental question today. We have to reaffirm our faith in democracy and freedom. The necessity for such an affirmation is greatest today because if the last war has proved anything it is that the common man, after having secured for himself employment and good conditions of work, will surely demand freedom and democracy for himself in order that he may develop himself to the fullest extent.

There is one more matter to which I would like to advert before I conclude. Today a demand has been made by certain parties that the Left should unite. They ask the Left parties to come together and form a united front. There is no doubt that a union of all the revolutionary and socialist forces, if realised, would constitute an indomitable force against reaction. But, unhappily, for reasons well-known and which have been briefly hinted above, such a collaboration does not seem possible in the near future.

We, Indian socialists, have tried our best to achieve socialist unity in this country at great cost to ourselves and we have discovered at least that we are pursuing a mirage and that those who expressed their eagerness to unite wanted to do so only for party advantage and not with a view to strengthen the movement. Strangely enough, this is not a phenomenon peculiar to India. Left disunity is a universal malady. There must be something seriously wrong in the communist code of behaviour and in their tactics which is responsible for so much disunity in the ranks of socialists. Unless they are radically altered there seems to be very little hope for unity anywhere. I would like to present the following passage from the organ of the Communist League (*September 1847*) to all the Leftists and specially to communists:

"Here we have only to address a few words to those proletarians who belong to other political or social parties. We all of us are out to fight extant society, because it oppresses us and allows us to rot in poverty and wretchedness. Instead of realising this and uniting our ranks, we are prone, alas, to squabble among ourselves, to fight with one another, much to the delight of our oppressors. Instead of, like one man, putting our hands to the work in order to establish a democratic State wherein each party would be able by word or in writing to win a majority over to its ideas we wrangle one with another as to what will or what will not happen when once we have been victorious."

If we are to achieve solidarity, the spokesmen of the various parties must cease their bitter attacks upon those who hold other views and must put an end to the abuse showered upon the adherents of opposing theories.

*Human Basis of Socialism**

On account of its faith in materialism, socialism is often attacked as a doctrine which views all questions from a narrow economic point of view; hence (it is further alleged) it is unable to posit any social ideals for the fulfilment of which man may be inspired to undergo self-sacrifice. People level this charge against socialism out of sheer ignorance; and there is not an iota of truth in this allegation. The lives of prominent socialists emphatically contradict this charge. Those who have studied the life of the father of scientific socialism, Karl Marx, are well aware of the sufferings amid which he had spent his life; and in spite of these sufferings he did not for a moment abandon his ideal of serving humanity. In his life, it frequently happened that there was no food in his house; he had no clothes to wear to go out and he was being crushed by a heavy debt. But he remained unshaken in the pursuit of his ideal, and remained firm in his principles in the midst of the direst sufferings. People might say that Karl Marx bore all these sufferings in order to give vent to his personal whims, so that there is no place for high ideals in the system that he built. Generally, it is believed that socialism only seeks to solve the problem of bread and butter. And because it regards history as a mere process of class struggle, it is impossible to expect it to evoke or project any high ideals.

A MISTAKEN VIEW

We shall now try to show on the basis of the fundamental principles of socialism (and not by quoting the personal examples of eminent socialists) that the above view is altogether unfounded. Marx had once himself said that he was not so thick skinned as to turn his back on the sufferings of humanity. Hattan has rightly remarked about Marx that he was so large hearted and tender that the smallest human suffering affected him more deeply than other people. Just as the seismograph is able to record

*From *Rashtriya aur Samajvad*. English translation of Hindi.

the slightest motion of the earth, so, also, Marx kept, as it were, on account of the smallest human suffering. He just could not stand the injustice of the situation in which one class of people are prosperous and cultured while others are denied the elementary necessities of life even though they are working day and night like virtual slaves. It is a pity that those who labour and produce all the wealth of the world, extract coal, oil, gold, silver and other minerals from the bowels of the earth, manufacture all the commercial goods in the factories, transport these goods by rail or otherwise from one corner of the earth to another, and raise all the high mansions of the world and decorate them—these people themselves lead a sub-human life; they live in filthy narrow houses where it is impossible to breathe fresh air; they wear dirty rags and are denied the benefits of education. Marx was deeply hurt by this social iniquity that denies the conditions of human life to millions of men and forces them to lead a sub-human existence. Indeed, Marx once remarked that the proletariat needed to be endowed with a sense of courage and self-respect and freedom, even more than it needed its daily bread. Rosa Luxembourg had once written to Franz Mehring that socialism was a cultural movement and not a mere plea for bread and butter. And as such it was a great ideology. The rallying point of this cultural movement is man, and hence, man is supreme. Indeed, any principle, 'ism' or idea, which detracted from the primacy of man—whether it came from religion, philosophy or economics—was unacceptable to Marx.

INADEQUACY OF RELIGION

Marx regarded human consciousness as the highest variety. Like Feurbach, Marx also held the view that man made religion and it was never the other way round; and as such the concept of an supra-human God was the product of man's imagination or illusion. There is no truth in it and it is merely the reflection of man's perverse imagination. To the extent that man attributes various virtues to God, in that measure he denigrates and reject himself. Religion is thus a hindrance to the full flowering of human life. A religion founded on the concept of an idyllic other-world tends to make us oblivious to our present responsibilities. Present-day religion tends to strengthen superstitions and vested interests, for it regards the present social system as a permanent arrangement which is divinely ordained. Religion wants to maintain *status quo*. And though class struggle has been sharpening day-by-day in the present society, yet religion stands for the inviolability of the present order. Man cannot develop himself fully or find his fulfilment in the present socio-economic order; yet religion supports and bolsters this social order. Religion, through

its false conception of an omnipotent God, tends to weaken man, and it stands in the way of man's self-respect and independence; moreover, by isolating man from the hard realities of life, religion forces him into a world of sheer imagination, so that man's innate consciousness is never able to develop itself fully. Thus, man is groaning under the crushing weight of religion. Socialism presents the correct perspective of religion and thus it helps release man from the thralldom of religion and enhance the dignity of man.

EVILS OF CAPITALISM

Religion defiles and disintegrates human life. In the same way, the capitalist order destroys the dignity of human labour. In this process the worker is isolated from the means of production. And his labour is floated on the market to be bought and sold like other commercial goods. The worker or labourer has no right over the product of his hard labour. Thus the worker is cut off from the products of his labour. Apparently this sort of labour is not natural to the labourer and, therefore, he lacks all interest in it. This is never a labour of love for the worker, nor does it contribute to his physical or intellectual development. Only it injures his health and saps his feelings. Hence the labourer's experience of his individuality always comes to him from his life outside his work. This kind of work divorces man's individuality from his physical existence. The more he works, the more he contributes to the strengthening of the outside world. At the same time, his own internal world becomes increasingly impoverished and isolated. It is this labour which leads to the creation of private property but all the product is owned by those who themselves produce nothing. This is the basic fact of the capitalist economy. Engels had, therefore, advised labour to make their creative or conscious contribution to the process of production in keeping with their humanity, and not like degraded agents devoid of all social consciousness, for thus alone could they help to end all the unnatural contradictions of the capitalist system. For the same reason, Marx had declared that the regeneration of human society could be brought about only by means of such reorganisation of the social forces as would make man the master of all those resources which impart new life to him. Hence socialism stands for the abolition of private property, for it isolates man from his labour. Society can be endowed with genuine humanity only through the abolition of private property. And thus alone can man consciously realise his true human potentialities. Hence, socialism is essential for a healthy human existence.

THE DISTORTED VIEW OF THE ECONOMISTS

Most of our economists endorse capitalism. They lack knowledge of

history. They are mere economists. They are unable to see that man establishes a set of relations as the powers of production expand, and that the form of this system of relations positively changes when the powers of production undergo further change and expansion. The social relations arising from the present system of production can continue only so long as the present system lasts. The laws of economics which these economists have devised are not universal or unchangeable. They apply only to the present system and their validity is confined to a particular stage of the historical process. These laws of economics reflect a stage of social relations which is transitory. As soon as these relations change these laws will also change. Hence, it would be absurd to regard these laws as permanent. If these laws were permanent there could be no possibility of social and economic progress.

The present society is marked by dislocation and lack of order. Man fights against man and there is all round strife. After the breakdown of the feudal order the primary powers are moving in an uncontrolled fashion. And though man appears to be free, he is in fact a slave. Certain social organs have been separated from him, as for example property, labour and religion. He mistakes their unbridled movement as indicative of his freedom. But in fact this unbridled movement indicates his slavery and his isolation from genuine human existence.

CAPITALIST STATE

The political freedom of man in a capitalist state is confined to his enjoying the formal citizenship and membership of the capitalist society. Modern state acknowledges the ordinary rights of man. The state does not politically recognise private property, for it takes no account of personal property in respect of the right to vote. Moreover the State ignores the differences of birth, education and profession, for it gives equal political rights to all. Also, religion is not supposed to interfere with State policy. Nevertheless, a developed State chiefly reflects the social life, and not the material, physical side of human life. When the state acknowledges the ordinary rights of man, it only concedes his existence and the freedom of the mental and physical organs of human life within the capitalist order. Hence, the State does not release man from the shackles of religion, it only leaves the individual free to choose a particular religion for himself. Similarly in conferring the right to vote it does not take into account the differences of property, birth and profession. However, this arrangement does not lead to the abolition of private property. Political liberty indeed does not make man free. Hence, man can be free only if his life is not disintegrated and when his mental and physical organs are not separated

from him. In other words, he can be free only when he is able to function as a social being and when he can organise his natural powers like the social power, so that there is no separation between the social powers and political power. Therefore, various specialised branches of knowledge, which study man in isolation from his organs, are apparently meaningless in the larger human context.

THE REALISTIC PATH

Even though Marx was the greatest votary of humanity, yet he did not indulge in a sheer flight of imagination. He took the concrete reality of this world as the basis of his research, and did not conceive of an idyllic, imaginary world of his own. He draws the old world from darkness to light. And then by analysing or examining it, and by formulating the principles of historic evolution, he seeks to discover it. All the prevailing philosophies offer ready-made solutions of the riddle of life. But Marx has no advance explanation valid for all times. He considers it his job to make a critical review of the present world; and he does it most relentlessly. He is not afraid of consequences or of having to clash with the powers that be. It is his view that society is the key to an understanding of the process of historical evolution. Man is social and he has no existence outside society. The foundation of every social system is its process of production and exchange. What will be produced, how it is produced, and how the produce is exchanged—it is these things which determine the nature of distribution and the class structure in the society. Thus, the final causes of social and political change should not be sought in the minds of men but in the forms of production and exchange. In other words, these causes will be found in the economic structure of an age or period, and not in its philosophy. It is being increasingly realised that present social institutions are not based on justice or reason. It points to the fact that silent changes have been occurring in the methods of production and exchange which are not in accord with the social order. It may also make it clear that the remedies for the evils that we have discovered are also present in some degree or the other in the newly emerging productive system. These remedies have to be sought and discovered in the present productive system, and not to be invented from our minds or imagination.

The present social system is capitalist. As this system develops, it leads to an intensification of the struggle among the powers of production and the means of production. This struggle is not willed by anybody, not even by those who seem to be generating it. The means to end the ills of the present system is the proletariat. While capitalist production leads to the concentration of property in the hands of a few capitalists, it also helps create the

proletarian labourer. The proletariat is a universal or all-pervasive class of the capitalist society because its suffering is also universal. It does not ask for any particular right because it has not suffered any particular injustice. Instead it is the very symbol and incarnation of suffering. This class makes no appeal in the name of humanity itself; and it cannot attain its salvation without carrying the other classes to this end. Indeed it is a class which has been deprived of its human character, so that it can realise itself by fully rediscovering its humanity. The proletariat lacks consciousness. And it would have its salvation only when it becomes aware of the conditions which can gain for its humanity. The doctrine of socialism can become a force only when it is able to influence the people and is accepted by them. In other words a principle or ideology can become a reality only when it is able to meet the people's needs. Therefore, the Marxist ideal cannot be deemed to have been attained until the proletariat as a class ceases to exist.

THE IMPORTANCE OF THE WORKING CLASSES

Only labour can accomplish this historic task in the capitalist society. It is, therefore, the leader of the socialist revolution. It hardly matters what immediate goal a worker or working class sets itself; be that as it may. But its particular place in the contemporary capitalist order will certainly force it to perform this historically necessary task one day. When the proletariat ceases to view its suffering as mere suffering and instead becomes aware of the revolutionary dimension of it, that very moment history gets a fillip and the proletariat gets involved in the process of conscious revolution. A revolution does not alter the process of history; it only speeds it up. In the words of Marx, the revolution is the locomotive of history, so that it helps intensify the speed of the historical process.

It is a mistake to think that the ills of a social order may be merely patched up from time to time without having to abandon its essential characteristics. In fact it is these ills which generate struggle and thus help make history. Hence, the very capitalism that produces wealth also creates poverty and unemployment. As the capitalists multiply, so does the proletariat and in the same proportion. Therefore, it is futile to seek to remedy the ills and yet to retain the essentials of the system. We cannot create a higher order in this way. If this were true the feudal order would never have ended nor would capitalism have come into existence. This would make nonsense of history.

Marx did not only suggest the means for rediscovering the lost humanity of the people, but he also actively worked for it. Earlier philosophers generally sought to maintain the *status quo*. On the other hand, Marxist philosophy aims at changing the social structure. Marx always fought for

humanity, and he suffered many hardships in the process. Mehring has called Marx the second Prometheus. Prometheus was the foremost martyr-saint of the western philosophical tradition. He could stand up to the most formidable threats, including, as it were, the legendary thunderbolt of Jupiter. He looked down upon all the gods. He could stand untold suffering but he was not prepared to do obeisance to the gods. Similarly, Karl Marx never wearied of his efforts for the regeneration of humanity and he never cared for the displeasure or threats of the capitalists. And he was never deflected from his path despite innumerable difficulties. His is a live philosophy which imparts a new spirit and inspiration to man. Indeed Marx's philosophy is the force which has imparted a new sense of life to the down-trodden, the outcaste, the illiterate and the poor; and it has lighted a new flame in their despondent hearts. Again, it is the philosophy which shows the road to salvation for millions of men. Only by treading this road shall people build a new order in which man will be taken for man and where no power on earth would be able to deprive him of his humanity.

*Revolution in India**

I have tried to trace in my earlier article the origin of a revolution. Lenin has explained its science. I wish to repeat it here. Time is ripe for revolution only when the exploited class becomes determined to change the Government, and the ruling class finds it difficult to run the administration through traditional and old methods. This is the period of national crisis, as Lenin said. Both the exploiters and the exploited are affected on this account.

Let us examine the situation today in view of this background. It is true that the people are facing more economic hardship and they have begun to realise that its remedy is not possible within the existing economic framework. It is also true that the internal strife within the ruling party has become acute and, as a result of disintegration, it is growing weak as time passes on. A feeling of revolt has been mounting among its members, and, therefore, one finds that discipline is eroding every day. This is also true that the authorities are overcome by serious difficulties which they find beyond their control. Everyday, there is a new problem. The problem of refugees is very complicated. With the problem of refugees coming from Punjab and Sind still not solved, a similar situation has arisen in Bengal. After the Indo-Pak treaty, both the parties have at least got the opportunity to think over and the mass massacre has come to a stop. Yet, all of us agree that there is no permanent solution to the communal problem. The exodus of Hindus from East Bengal has not come to an end. The reason is that the Hindus there do not feel safe enough to live on there with honour. If such mass exodus continues, it will be a heavy burden on the country to bear. The problem of food will become acute. There is shortage of food in

feel safe enough to live with honour. If such mass exodus continues, it will be a heavy burden on the country to bear. The problem of food will become acute. There is shortage of food in Madras

*From 'Janvani', Year 4, Part 8, Chapter 3. Translated from Hindi article.

and part of Bihar. Some people have also died of starvation. On the one hand the population is rising, while, on the other, millions of people are coming to India from East Bengal. As a result, the food problem has become all the more acute. The Government finds it difficult to stop black-marketing. The traders raise prices on the slightest pretext. No appeals or threats from the Government have any effect on the traders. Corruption among the bureaucracy is rampant. They have no feeling for national reconstruction. Communalism has raised its ugly head and established its alliance with reactionary forces. There seems to be no way to end the influence of these forces. In old princely states, the system of *Jagirdari* is still in vogue. The princes' influence will not disappear by taking over their states. They assert their influence by maintaining the system of landlordism. The Government has no definite policy; nor does it work according to a plan. In one year it initiates big plans, and, in another, the plans are kept in cold storage for want of money. Sometimes plans are even implemented but they are given up soon for financial reasons.

In spite of all this, the Government has been able to maintain law and order. This is the only source of strength. Discontent among the people goes on simmering. As a result people feel helpless and hopeless. Their condition is such that they are bound to grow indifferent and inactive. We will think over these reasons. At present, we are concerned only with this much that when there is a revolutionary situation, the people become active and are prepared to undergo any suffering in order to liberate themselves. Their agitation then is expressed in strikes and demonstrations. But the day-to-day work of the trade unions is different from it. Whatever activity is there in the industrial field, it comes about sporadically and after long intervals. But strikes are organised for different reasons. Even so, by no means a revolution is confined only to the working class organised in trade unions. Even the backward working class is organised and other classes besides them may also join in it. A single strike in a trade does not take a political shape. In the beginning there may be local strikes at different places, which later may grow into a comprehensive, nationwide struggle.

A series of strikes indicate moral improvement of the working class. If this happens, the moral strength of the ruling class is weakened and that of the working class is strengthened. The moral strength of the working class increases with every successful strike action.

Today, despite economic hardship and rising discontent against the Government, the working class is still indifferent. This is the sign of its moral weakness. The working class lacks encouragement and self-confidence. The peasants may not be suffering hardships in view of the rise in foodgrain production and may be having patience still. But the

hardships of the landless labourer have increased. This class of the agricultural workers is most exploited but it is not conscious and organised. Whatever peasant struggles might have taken place, it has not the least benefited the rural toiling masses. On the other hand, in order to curb the landless workers, it has been kept in mind that they get no encouragement in ventilating their grievances. Till now, both the workers and the peasants have been working under the same banner. Now the time has come when more attention should be given to their conditions. There is a time that in order to keep them together the smaller peasants and the landless labourer should formulate their common issues. The smaller peasant does much of his work himself. He takes very little help from the landless labour. Very little has been achieved or even attempted to bring them together. The reason is that there is still the class distinction. At times, there might be local struggles but this cannot be the condition of a revolution. Even the working class is not very organised; they are divided among many parties. Those parties which are working among the working class are involved in mutual jealousy and there is no cooperation between them. The style of the working class continues to be traditional. That is why that no strong trade union could be built up. Many caste organisations have come up to divide the small peasant and the working class. There are none by the name of *Soshit Sangh*. Whatever reawakening has come in this country finds its dubious expression through caste organisations. In our social system their growth is natural. It has its effect both on the peasant and the landless labour. This has been the state of affairs since the beginning.

In Maharashtra the Workers' and Peasants Party was said distinctly non-Brahmin in the beginning but has since widened its scope. It is now working according to a broad-based programme but is still not prepared to work in co-operation with other parties having similar programmes. The Communist Party may act according to the tactics of the Cominform but it will not join hands with other radical parties. In the Communist party the Brahmins are more than the people of other castes. It perpetuates the caste Brahmins, in fact. Yet it tends to escape the charge that it belongs to a particular caste. Wherever there are caste organisation, there is greater confusion, and the leadership of the exploited is dissipated and each group works against one another resulting in weakening of the movement.

Now I take the question of the lower middle class in towns and small cities. Their hardship has increased much. They are greatly discontented but they are disorganised and hence may participate in the revolutionary only after the ground has been prepared by the peasants and the working class. The lower middle class people are divided in several professions. There are many among these classes, who, according to law, are unable to join any political party but only different trade unions. It is difficult to bring

them together on one platform. This is disappointing. Also, they may revolt, only when their interests are at stake.

Why such is the condition of the exploited class? I have said something about it earlier. There are other aspects also that we should consider. One of the reasons is that they had great expectations from the Congress and it did not come up to their expectations. There is a long history of sacrifices behind the Congress. It had big leaders. The greatest pressure on this organisation was that of Gandhiji and Nehru. Our country has always worshipped the national leaders. The people have not been educated politically. The people think that when the Congress and its leaders do not fulfil their promises, how could they expect others to do their part? In view of this trend, a climate of disappointment is pervading this country. The people have become indifferent to politics. Even the youth have grown indifferent to social and political questions.

There is another reason that the people get fed up very soon. We have the strength, indeed, to reach our destination, however long way it might seem. We had fondly hoped that now there could be an end to our miseries. This has been our tradition that we have always blamed the rulers responsible for our miseries. A father whose son dies when he is alive, holds the King responsible for the tragedy. According to this tradition, when we voted for the Congress we thought we have done our duty and expected the Congress would do everything for us. The people in this country do not realise their own duties nor does the Government make any attempt to take their cooperation. This is a well-known fact that without the people's cooperation, no national reconstruction is possible. The Government of the day is not bothered about it. It makes it all the more difficult to bring about greater national consolidation. But why? I do not understand. On account of various reasons there has been disappointment on every side. The people are disappointed and they have no faith in political organisations.

The situation also favours the present Government in view of the Indo-Pak conflicts or the possibility of another World war. All this does not allow the people to change. They think if there is a change in the Government now, the country may be doomed. There has been a permanent threat to the country on account of the formation of Pakistan. It has given impetus to communalism. The problems of Kashmir and East Bengal have added to this menace.

Our attention has been diverted from basic questions to the threat of Pakistan. The community that is responsible for the partition of India has become very active at this moment. They deeply feel that the challenge of Pakistan can only be met by indulging in communal frenzy. The Pakistan phobia has gone deep in our country and, as a result, the reactionary forces are getting strengthened in our country. Such a state of affairs implicitly

helps the Congress Government in extending tenure. This, at least, is the biggest obstacle in the way of progressive forces.

We should give our attention to minority communities, beginning with the Muslim community. This community is always dependent on the Government. The Muslim League got support of the British Government. The moment this support was withdrawn, it collapsed instantly. Pakistan was formed but, Muslims in India were plunged into the darkness of frustration. They are now being looked upon with suspicion and distrust. They, therefore, felt compelled to support the Congress in order to prove their loyalty to the State. The Muslim League may be the enemy of the Congress. But Muslims also wanted it on their own accord that they should oppose the Congress. However, they began to falter and ultimately they could not muster courage to do so. The members of the Jamait had supported the Congress and they also tried to bring Muslims within the Congress fold. Whenever there was a predominance of Hindu communalism, Muslims were forced to look upon the Congress for their protection. After the Indo-Pak treaty, Muslims generally became the supporters of Pandit Nehru. Whatever attitude they might have towards the Congress, they are with Nehru, and whenever there is an election they will respond to Pandit Nehru's appeal. The followers of the Jamait are still maintaining some freedom but they have confined themselves to dispelling the doubts of the Government and the Congress about Muslims, or to resolving any religious conflicts with Muslims. They have no interest as far as economic problems are concerned. Their progressive outlook has ended with the attainment of independence. They have taken interest now in settling the disputes of Muslims as the Kazi would. There is a peculiar situation as regards this party of Muslims.

As a matter of fact, these Muslims have no place in politics; for, they always keep themselves aloof from it. But, at the polls, they must vote for the Congress, because they think that Pandit Nehru is their only protector. How long will they remain in this condition is difficult to say. But I think if there is a permanent treaty between India and Pakistan, which is observed in letter and spirit, Muslims may then give thought to their economic and social problems.

Now take the question of Harijans. Being backward and in a minority, they look to the Government constantly for everything. They might remain with the Congress since it has secured some rights and also done something for them. They have their own independent organisations. They are opposed to the Communists. But they do not have enough strength to take the whole society along with them. Despite his being secretary of these organisations, a Harijan is interested only in linking up his organisation, even the Harijan community at large with the Congress. I

have merely mentioned the situation ordinarily prevailing in this country. The Harijans, who are under the influence of *Kisan Panchayats*, and the Khetiyar Majdoor Sangh are with the Congress. The minority communities like Christians, Anglo-Indians are with the Government. The main reason for this is that there is no sufficient political awakening among them. It is evident now from the above analysis that though there is a situation ripe for revolution in this country, it cannot be brought about in the absence of some other vital factors one of which being the lack of activity among the masses. The main task is to change the people's psychology. One should organise small peasants and the landless labourers on the basis of redistribution of land. If there is a possibility, trade unions should work together to launch their struggles. The socialist workers should set up labour colleges at different places in order to enable the trade unions to function properly. The peasant's organisation and the labour unions should be properly organised, and, through class struggles of the peasants and the working class, we should create consciousness among them. Similarly, we should create political consciousness among the minority communities. To carry out these programmes there should be proper arrangements to train the party workers. Even if there is a revolutionary situation, no benefit could be derived by the party if the working class and the peasants have no heart in it.

It is, therefore, necessary to arrange for the training of the party workers from at least this point of view. Socialism is an attempt to establish a new culture. The party workers will be its vanguards. This culture will not descend from the sky. A new culture can alone be created on the basis of whatever mankind has accumulated so far. Marxism took its birth in the same manner. To read the Socialist literature is not enough. In the age of capitalism, the scope of Knowledge has widened and new disciplines have been established. However, only Marxists have made an analytical study of all this knowledge and also verified it through experiments. A new culture can only be founded keeping in mind the evolution of mankind from the earliest times. The accumulation of knowledge, the thinking of different cultures in different eras and their growth over the centuries will provide the proper perspective for the new culture. The knowledge so gained will be the new culture's protector as well. The older generations have left us the treasure of knowledge and we should enrich it by our own thinking. We should not remain satisfied with this heritage of ours. But we should think over independently and analytically the principles enunciated and the knowledge contained in books. It was not possible to establish Socialism after capturing power in the elections held in March. This thinking has been done in detail recently. We should study the new literatures. We should study the history of the Communists, the social sciences, the scientific

progress and philosophy. History should always be our guide. It is deeply connected with the older times and helps in determining policies depending on a particular situation of the country. It is, therefore, necessary that we should be familiar with our country's past. We have to take the help of our own resources. We have to change the psychology of our people. It is equally necessary to know the traditions and the feelings of our people. We can establish a new culture only after making use of modern scientific methodology to understand a situation in our country. In the changed circumstances, the knowledge learnt from the books or the ideas formulated therein will not do. Our mind should be flexible and we should have the faculty to formulate policies and programmes according to the new situation as it exists at a particular time in our country. To achieve success is a difficult task but every worker can make an attempt to move forward. The workers should develop in themselves thirst for knowledge, worship of truth, clarity of fundamental principles, faith in new culture and new society, integrity of character and devotion to work. The experience that they may derive from their work will provide fresh energy for them to face the situation. This is our foremost duty. This should be the main programme of our action. There is no possibility of a revolution during the next two or three years unless something happens which removes the disappointment of the people. But this is the second year for us. This is the time to prepare ourselves. The situation will be favourable to us. There is no doubt about it. The more solid our work, the nearer we will be to Revolution.

*On the Eve of Independence**

The British are leaving behind illiteracy, poverty, backward industries and a primitive agricultural system. We have to start afresh and to achieve in what we need most is the hearty co-operation of the people. We have to direct the people's energies into constructive channel and to arouse and strengthen new interest and enthusiasm among them.

If we assure the depressed classes that the social inequalities of today would soon disappear, they would fully co-operate in the task of national reconstruction; and we would be able to make good use of their great potential. There is immense man-power in our country, which we have yet to utilise fully. And we can very well do it if only we proceed with imagination and sympathy in the matter. We shall have to impress on the people that the State values human capacities and that they are themselves significant components of State power.

We have also to keep in mind the fact that in this age, economic equality is being increasingly emphasized everywhere. Wherever there are great economic inequalities among the classes, happy life does not exist. Hence it is essential for the future of democracy that economic and social inequalities should be removed.

It is unmistakably clear that any attempt to implement the Hindu State would lead to the disappearance of democracy and to the prolongation of the evils of the present social order. Conservative and reactionary forces will acquire new strength. These forces will spare no efforts to sabotage our efforts to evolve a democratic order in India and cast their evil shadow over the vital economic field. Thus, any idolizing of the past would prove very dangerous for us. Only the new social philosophy can help develop and give new direction to the will of our people. Otherwise the reactionary outlook of the worshippers of the past will tend to overwhelm us.

We have to protect those new social and spiritual values for the development of which we have had to undergo immense difficulties. Surely

*Presidential Address at the Seventh annual conference of the Socialist Party, Patna, 6 March, 1949

we cannot waste the experience of the last two generations. In the recent past we learnt to value the popular nationalism of Mazzini as against the narrow chauvinism of Hitler. We have always been vigilant about the fact that our nationalism should not degenerate into sheer national arrogance and that we should never look down upon other nations. Lately nationalism everywhere has tended to become narrower than before. We have reason to be on the alert in the matter.

If the above analysis is right, we should not delay taking the new step forward. *15th August* (1947) should be the day to throw overboard the old ways and policies. On this day, the government must make a new declaration containing a message of hope for the exploited and the backward and a reiteration of the sovereignty of the people. This declaration should announce how, and to what extent, the people would be associated with the exercise of power in the new State. However it is not enough to make promises for the future. The government must give concrete demonstration of its intentions. For, the people cannot be enthused by mere declarations. It would be very good indeed if the government makes a declaration to abolish *Zamindari* on this day.

The foundation of democracy should be laid immediately. Hardened realists perhaps regard it less important than defence preparations and the civil services. But all these tasks are equally important, and none of them can be put off for the future. The so-called realists may be inclined to assign greater importance to the present needs and to sacrifice the future at the altar of the present. This type of realism is not unlikely to degenerate into opportunism. The unadulterated idealist might sacrifice the present for the sake of the future. But, then, the future of his conception might never emerge. Those whose idealism is rooted in realism would follow the middle course and fasten together, as it were, the present and the future. The realists have a tendency to dub idealism as an airy affair and, as such, to make light of it. But they ought not to forget that history is shaped not so much by efficient administration and diplomacy as by soaring idealism.

The establishment of democracy is impossible without the wide expansion of education. We have to direct the people's lives along the democratic road; and nothing would help it so much as the co-operative movement. In such a social set-up the people are moved to come forward and work for their own good, and they come in close contact with one another on a basis of social equality and to co-operate for the larger good of the society and democracy. This revolutionary and popular association generates a unique moral influence which helps in shaping a democratic order run by free individuals.

In addition, it would be necessary to improve the condition of those who are backward, culturally, socially, and economically. Only by acting in this

fashion can we remove those social inequalities which are the bane of our present social relations. Hence, let us repeat, the State should do its best to ensure equal opportunities for all communities. Even the best of government cannot by itself fulfil all these objectives. To this end, non-official agencies will have to be widely established so that they might help the official efforts through a country-wide campaign of educative propaganda. There is no dearth of idealism and the spirit of self-sacrifice in the Congress. And the reason why these virtues seem to be on the wane today lies in the fact that it (the Congress) has no systematic programme before it. Moreover, its goals have not changed in keeping with the changing circumstances.

The influence of the Congress is declining, so that it is no longer in a position to take up policies which the people might follow. It has now been reduced to an agency for electioneering and for echoing the decisions and doings of the Government. Everybody is talking of revitalising the Congress. But who has got the time to reflect on this problem?

We shall have to give away the people's sense of complacency. It would be wrong to think that so long as Gandhiji and Jawaharlal Nehru are alive, the country's interests are safe in their hands. We must, indeed, remember that an organisation is judged by the performance of its rank-and-file members, and not by the quality of its few top leaders. Even in its declining phase, India has produced several great men. And yet the people's condition has not risen adequately.

In fact, there must be a basic flaw somewhere in a political system in which the people tend always to look up to its leaders. I am afraid this state of mind is the breeding ground for totalitarianism, which suppresses the millions so that a few leading lights among the leaders might prosper and dominate. In a democracy, it is essential to have a large number of men and women of sturdy common sense. Hence, the paramount problem before us is to elevate and give democratic education to the common man in the country. But are we going to do it?

*Basic Issues**

One of the prevailing misconceptions that Socialism is incompatible with democracy deserves to be removed. Marx was one of the great humanists. His zeal for freedom of the individual is remarkable. He believed that history had a direction and that in this epoch the revolutionary proletarian was the representative of mankind. He criticised capitalism as an unjust social system because it engendered individualism and egoism in search of profit.

Under capitalism the working class is obliged to sell its labour power like any other commodity and alienate its human essence. He wanted to liberate that class from slavery and to reclaim its essence and for this the capitalist system, which is based on profit-motive and competition, has to be replaced by a collective system which would develop a spirit of unity and do away with the search for profit. In the words of Marx, "the emancipation of the proletariat will be the complete human emancipation of society, since all the oppressions of society are concentrated in the proletariat". In the words of Rosa Luxemburg, "Socialism is not bread and butter problem but a world cultural movement".

Totalitarianism creates terror and makes man a mere cog in the State machine. It destroys human dignity and does not afford opportunities to the individual to develop his personality. It establishes a new form of tyranny and slavery in which the citizen has no individual will of his own and acts as a passive tool of the State. Surely, Socialism, which breathes the idea of freedom for the masses, cannot approve of such a conception of Government.

It is strange that Communists, who, in the days of 'Popular Front' and again during the last war, formed a united front with all the democratic forces to save parliamentary democracy and to fight against war and fascism, have in their own country an autocratic totalitarian State which exercises absolute control over the lives of the people. The 'people's war' was fought and won over the issue of the preservation of democratic right

*Annual Conference of the Socialist Party, held in Patna, 1949.

of the people; the issue of the war was political democracy *versus* fascism. Democratic freedom must express some vital need of the common people in order that it may inspire millions to heroic action. It cannot be argued that the last war was a war for survival. The question is: Survival for what? People cherished and valued their democratic rights and wanted to save their country from the imposition of fascist ideology. After so much devastation and destruction of human life and property, it would be nothing short of madness to accept a totalitarian regime.

It was expected that the Russians, who played a heroic part in defeating the Axis powers, would set their own house in order and democratise the State and social institutions. But nothing of the kind happened and it would, therefore, not be illegitimate to infer that Soviet leaders did not owe any allegiance to political democracy and were only exploiting the democratic sentiments of the people of world democracies in order to win them on their side in their struggle against fascism. But the human values, for the preservation of which the world went through a bloodbath, must be strongly defended and those who call themselves Communists or Socialists will be guilty of betrayal of people's interests if they fail to do so.

FEDERATION AND NATIONAL UNITY

Provincialism is another evil from which our people suffer. With a view to strengthening Indian unity, it is essential that there should be inter-provincial amity and concord. This is possible only when we try to understand each other and know something of each other's language and literature. A unity form of Government is not a remedy. We can no longer resist the demand for the reconstitution of provinces on a linguistic basis and it would be politic to concede this demand before it is too late. Our past history and tradition have both been in favour of the demand, and a federal constitution is well suited to Indian conditions.

There are, of course, other methods for achieving the ends we have in view. One of the methods is the adoption of a uniform script for all the provincial languages. This will facilitate the task of learning these languages, most of which are derived from the same parent stock. A common civil code, irrespective of caste and creed, and a common economic organisation is another much-needed reform which may be expected to strengthen the inter-provincial ties. All causes of mutual distrust and antagonism should be removed, and within a province all communities, specially minorities, should be made to feel that their legitimate interests will not be jeopardised and that social justice will be done to all classes.

The caste system has been the bane of India. It has broken the Hindu

community into watertight compartments. In the elections that have recently been held, the evil of caste has become apparent. Political groups are being formed on the basis of castes and in certain localities the so-called lower castes have banded themselves together against the higher castes. In Indian conditions, this represents the struggle of the disinherited and the oppressed against privileges of birth and wealth. Howsoever we may dislike this state of things, I am afraid we shall have to pass through this inevitable stage. Recognition of communal electorates and according sheltered position to certain communities in the past, is mainly responsible for the present situation. I am, however, persuaded to think that this will only be a temporary phase in our politics. But, it is disquieting to learn that in certain places Congressmen are entering into a sort of unholy alliance with caste organisations to maintain themselves in power. I think that if we educate them on proper lines and demonstrate by our conduct that we sincerely desire to raise their social and economic status and are prepared to concede to them their just political rights and shed our monopolistic tendencies, we may succeed in convincing them about the futility of having small groups on the narrow basis of caste. The Socialist Party, being the defender of the rights of the exploited, stands the best chance of winning their confidence. They can be initiated into the principles and policies of the Party and can be weaned away from casteism and sectionalism in politics. Betterment of their social and economic conditions is possible only in a socialist society which is based on equality and social justice.

AGRARIAN PROBLEM

The next important question which I would like to discuss is the agrarian problem. The abolition of the *zamindari* is long overdue and it is still not in sight. But for purposes of discussion I would assume that it is going to be abolished in the near future. In my own province, the report of the Zamindari Abolition Committee has been published and it is reported that a Bill is being drafted. Its recommendations are not progressive and they do not fully implement the resolution of the legislature under which it was appointed. The directive of the legislature was to abolish the class of intermediaries between the State and the cultivator. But this has not been accepted as the basis of the Committee's recommendations. The Committee has recommended dispossession of a very large class of sub-tenants, and there is no provision for the redistribution of land. The second point which I would like to urge is as regards the award of compensation. The Socialist Party does not in theory accept this principle. We are of the opinion that no compensation should be awarded as a rule on proprietary basis, but compensation can be paid to poor land-owners on the basis of rehabilita-

tion. This means that the rich are not entitled to get any compensation while conditions shall be created for the poor so that they may make a fresh start in life. But since the Government is committed to the principle of awarding compensation, we have agreed to modify our position a little. We have adopted a graduated scale and have fixed the upper limit at one lakh. We have also suggested that the maximum area which may be allowed to be retained by any cultivator should not exceed 30 acres, and this rule should be enforced simultaneously with the passing of the Act. If this rule is accepted, big farms will have to be broken and land made available for distribution amongst the poorer classes of peasants and *zamindars*. Again, no consideration has been paid in the report to the lot of those whose holdings are uneconomic, though their percentage is very high. It can well be conceived that in such a province agriculture will remain unprofitable and the surplus produce of foodgrains will not be very large. Their case is hard and though it is true that the productivity of the land can be increased by improved seeds, better manure and improved breed of cattle, this will be possible only if they pool their resources together and enter upon a cooperative enterprise. But this will naturally take a long time.

In the meantime, all that we can do is to try to make as many holdings economic as possible in the circumstances and to afford some other relief to those which remain uneconomic. I suggest that the amount of rent that may be charged from them should be reduced to a very large extent if the Government is not prepared to make them rent-free.

Another criticism which I would like to offer is as regards the amount of rent which should be taken from the peasant after the *zamindari* has been abolished. The proposal is to charge the same rent which he is paying today. But if this is given effect to, the peasant will have no psychological satisfaction and he will not feel any change in his status. Our suggestion is that they should not be called upon to pay more than the land revenue which the *zamindar* is paying today. The proposal cannot be justified on the ground that the tenant should bear the burden of compensation. We are opposed to it because it will be another form of exploitation. In our opinion, the burden should be borne by the State or it should be placed on the shoulders of other exploiting classes. We do not also approve of the idea of selling the holdings to peasants for a price, as we feel convinced that most of the peasants will not be able to take advantage of the scheme and it may create many other complications. If the burden of rent is lightened and there are no illegal exactions and they are not liable to ejection, they will be perfectly satisfied.

Another defect of the report is that it does not pay much attention to landless labour. There should be a Minimum Wage Act, and cottage industries should be established to enable them to supplement their income.

Besides, more than 20 per cent of the land which is fallow but cultivable should be brought under the plough and agricultural labourers should be settled on these lands.

RECONSTRUCTION OF RURAL LIFE

But, above all, it is necessary that the entire human relationship in the countryside should be altered and placed on a democratic basis. For this purpose, it is necessary to introduce cooperation in farming and marketing of agricultural products. The village panchayats should be recognised as the political, judicial and economic organisation of the village. The villagers will not take easily to cooperation and we will have to convince them of its utility by persuasion, propaganda and offer of inducements. Agriculturists learn from experience and if the farmer is convinced of the superiority of the cooperative method, because it gives him a better yield and a better price for his products, he will readily take to it. For this purpose the Government agency is not enough. Its efforts will have to be supplemented by non-official agencies which alone can bring enthusiasm and a spirit of adventure in the task. The village panchayat has still got its hold on the mind of the people and if it is revived in a new form and a new basis, it may succeed in the end. The panchayats should also be the agency for the collection of rent.

The village has been neglected so much that unless we do something radical to introduce a new atmosphere, it is not going to improve. There are no social amenities and no cultural centre in the village and the sad result is that educated young men have no attraction to stay there and they migrate to towns, thus depriving the village of their service and their leadership. The situation should be remedied and in order that the countryside may present a good picture it is necessary that all these reforms are taken in hand at once and together.

The general observations I have made above are equally applicable to other provinces.

INTUC: GOVERNMENT'S LABOUR FRONT

The next question that I would like to consider is that of labour. The machinery which the Government have set up for the settlement of industrial disputes imposes diverse restrictions on the right of collective bargaining. The Government has constituted Conciliation Boards and Industrial Tribunals for settlement and adjudication of industrial disputes but the machinery is so complicated and the proceedings are so dilatory that it generally works for the benefit of employers and does not

adequately protect labour. Again, the constitution of Works Committees strikes at the root of industrial democracy. The Government follows the policy of favouritism and discriminates against non-Congress Workers' organisations.

It recognises the Congress-sponsored INTUC as the most representative labour organisation and in the United provinces it has given it the right to nominate members of Works Committees. It is an attack on the democratic right of workers to elect their Works Committees. The result is that in many factories the Works Committees do not represent the workers, and as such, do not enjoy their confidence. These committees are in no way related to trade unions whose influence is thus undermined, and the result is that they do not receive any support and cooperation from the unions. An undesirable effect of this provision of the law is that Works Committees are being put up in opposition to trade unions. The partisan attitude of the Government in thus bolstering up the unrepresentative INTUC is resented by the general body of workers. The bargaining position of trade unions is thus being reduced to a minimum and there is a virtual veto on the right to strike.

The Government asks the workers to raise production, but by ignoring representative and influential unions and foisting on the workers the organisation which represents only a minority of workers, it discourages the workers from participating in the factory effort to raise production. The sole object of the Government seems to be to disrupt the trade union movement; and by its indirect aid and recognition of the INTUC which is controlled by the Congress, to compel the workers to come into its fold, and to deprive them of their inherent right to strike. It is noteworthy that the INTUC believes only in negotiation and arbitration and is opposed to strike in any event. It is thus evident that while the Government blames other parties for exploiting labour for its political ends, it is itself guilty of the same. The non-Congress unions are generally not allowed to pursue their lawful trade union activities and their workers are arrested and externed. Specific cases can be given where non-Congress unions have been baulked of their just right only because their members have refused to join the INTUC.

In Dalmianagar armed forces were used to break the peaceful strike of workers and to terrorise the inhabitants of the surrounding villages because of their sympathy for them and their leader, Basawan Singh, who has been arrested. In Jamshedpur, Munshi Ahmed Din, a member of the National Executive of the Socialist Party was arrested and many party workers have been externed. Rising prices with the lag in real wages, and the authoritarian attitude of the Government towards labour, were making labour restive and were contributing to the growth of militancy among

in the war if one breaks out. India's interest demands that it should keep out of the war and every possible effort should be made to see that peace of the world is not disturbed. It can effectively play such a role only if it does not identify itself with any of the blocs. Such an identification is bound to provoke antagonism of one or the other of the major powers. The membership of the British Commonwealth carries with it the obligation to participate in its policies of peace and war; and even if it is not so, it is sure to excite suspicion of others about our *bonafides* to remain neutral.

Moreover, India has no place in a Commonwealth one of whose members does not treat our nationals on terms of equality, and accords them an inferior status. Again, Britain occupies a leading position among Western democracies and is expected to play the role of leadership of democratic forces of the world. But both France and Holland, which are its allies, are not giving up their imperialistic designs in South-East Asia. The federation of Western Europe has been formed to act as a bulwark against Communism and it has the powerful support of the USA. Britishers are also known to have fomented trouble in Burma and encouraged its disintegration. The Foreign Minister of Australia has in an uncautious moment advised Burma to return to the Commonwealth. British policy in India, on the eve of the withdrawal, was one of the division of the territory. It seems that they do not want Asian countries to maintain their solidarity and retain their territorial integrity. On these various grounds it is not in our interest to remain in the British Commonwealth. This, however, does not preclude us from entering into a friendly treaty with Britain for commercial and cultural purposes; but on no account can we agree to tie ourselves in a war which may make India one of the theatres of war, and thus cause us devastation and destruction on a large scale.

We should also not forget that the policies which Britain and its Western allies are following in South-East Asia today are sure to promote the cause of Communism in those countries, and if Communism triumphs in these regions our last hope to create a third force with the help of these countries will fade away.

NEED FOR STRUCTURAL CHANGES

I have said above that the Party suffers from certain defects which need to be cured. In the first place, our present constitution is not at all suitable to our new needs. It needs revision and the Party has to be reconstituted on a new basis. At present it is the party of the select, but if we want to achieve our objectives and want to be treated as a serious alternative to the Congress, we must broaden ourselves. We must entrench ourselves among the masses and win their allegiance. The Party has to be forged as

them. Denial of the right to strike and restriction of the right of collective bargaining by various devices will inevitably lead the workers to lose faith in peaceful methods. Many unions recently repudiated Communists and have been detached from the Communist-dominated AITUC and if this process is to continue and the Indian trade union movement is to develop on sound lines, the Government must give up its partisan attitude and learn to distinguish between those who believe in violent methods, whose sole aim is to create discontent and foment rebellion and others who believe in democratic and peaceful methods. But the Government, instead of removing the basic causes of labour unrest continues to woo and appease the capitalist class, and more concessions have again been granted to it in the hope that it will thus be induced to make investments in industry and trade. The Government in its policies mirrors the mental attitude of petty bourgeoisie who have neither the courage to travel the path of the people's revolution nor the will to identify themselves completely with the interests of the capitalist class. It is ever trying to make minor adjustments between the two opposing interests, and is on the whole dominated by vested interests. But the times are such that a bold and courageous policy of fundamental change alone can save the situation.

The problem of States is another question on which a few observations will not be out of place. The States Ministries claim to have performed a miracle. With the withdrawal of British power in India the princely order was bound to fade away. We have a word of commendation for its diplomatic success dealing with the smaller princes but to say that there has been bloodless revolutions in the States is not justified by facts. In certain States the people took the initiative and compelled the rulers to abdicate. It is also necessary that the States which have been merged into the provinces should be completely integrated with them. The dynasties of Kashmir and Hyderabad should be abolished. Foreign settlements should form part of the Indian Union. We cannot forget those brave comrades of Goa who are rotting in a fortress prison in Portugal and have been sentenced to long terms of imprisonment. The people everywhere are ready for an upsurge and the inalienable right of the people of these settlements to decide their political future must be recognised.

COMMONWEALTH LINK

One of the questions that is agitating the public mind is whether India should remain within the British Commonwealth or should come out of it. The world is divided into two power blocs, and if we want to keep out of the third world war we have no place in either of the two camps. The Indian State is committed to the policy of neutrality and has no desire to take sides

an instrument of democratic socialism, and the alliance of the intellectual classes had to be secured. It is not by mere propaganda that we can hope to succeed. The task of construction is stupendous and it will require all our energy and intelligence to accomplish it. Means of production have to be brought under common ownership so that privilege and exploitation may cease. Social services have to be organised for the benefit of the common man.

The unregulated economic system has to give place to planned economy, and, above all, human relationship has to be so altered as to establish the democratic way of life. All this needs intense and careful study of various economic and social problems which await solution. The Party has not only to put forward a precise programme but has to convince large masses of people that it knows its business and has the capacity to implement it when it is called to power. While we build class organisations of workers and peasants and by our service and hard work win their confidence, we have also to work among intellectuals and rally them round the party banner. Students of economics and social sciences must be brought to the Party fold, and their advice and guidance should always be available in framing our policies and in the study of our problems. We suffer from paucity of workers, and in my opinion this is our chief weakness. We need trained workers of a high order who have both the knowledge of problems and the crusading zeal for the creation of party cadres.

The Socialist Youth League is the one organisation which, if properly organised, can give recruits for the Party. Labour Colleges should be established for the training of workers where provision should be made not only for imparting theoretical knowledge but also for promoting efficiency of the workers.

*Our Tasks Ahead**

We have just completed the first year of our existence as an independent party. Last year at Nasik we took the momentous decision of separating ourselves from the parent organisation which we loyally served for full fourteen years. Nothing has happened since then which may induce us to revise that decision. To the contrary, every day that passes brings in fresh evidence to the effect that the decision was eminently correct and necessary.

Since the achievement of our independent status, our responsibilities and obligations have increased manifold. Many of you who were present at the Nasik Conference will remember that I made the observation in the course of my speech that for some time to come we might have to go into the wilderness. Much of our prestige and influence was due to our long association with the Congress. We were regarded as a ginger group and its chief function was to prevent the Congress from deviating from the revolutionary path and degenerating into a purely Parliamentary Party. This task we accomplished with great success, so much so that some of our leaders who took a distinguished part in the 1942 struggle became national heroes and brought immense prestige and popularity to the Party.

But every thing changed when we came out of the Congress as a party in opposition. Many could not appreciate the decision we had taken; they were confused and bewildered and stood against at the strange spectacle that the Socialist Party came out in opposition to the Congress Party and challenged its claim to leadership. Congressmen also deliberately tried to misrepresent us. They accused us of having stabbed them in the back at a moment when the whole country was passing through a crisis. Some denounced us as being guilty of patricide. All sorts of abusive epithets were hurled against us and we were painted in blackest colours. We had, therefore, to take immense pains to explain to the public the reasons which led us to take this momentous step. Much of the misunderstanding caused in the public mind was removed by us. But there were still many who fell

*Annual conference of the Socialist Party, 1949.

into our opponents' trap and refused to be convinced for a long time. In the beginning, our prestige suffered diminution : all sorts of motives were attributed to us; we were represented as disgruntled office-seekers who had come out in their new role of opposition as a result of a sense of frustration.

In UP Assembly bye-elections, political issues were generally avoided. Congressmen did their best to confuse and mystify the electorate by importing into the discussion irrelevant issues and by appealing to the religious sentiments of the people. An appeal was made to traditional beliefs, passions and prejudices of the people, instead of to human reason. Methods of the pulpit were employed by Congress workers and the slogan of 'religion and culture in danger' was given. Gandhiji's spirit was invoked again and again to bless the Congress candidates. The Government machinery was employed to influence the electorate and many corrupt practices were resorted to. Little wonder then that we lost heavily in the elections.

It is true that the result of the elections gave a rude shock to our comrades but it is also true that they recovered from it very quickly. The reactions of the public were of a varied character. Some lost faith in parliamentary methods; some were of the opinion that the system of voting should be changed, while there were many who lost faith in the capacity of the Socialist Party to deliver the goods. They had originally made an exaggerated estimate of the Party's strength and influence. This opinion was also shared by the rank and file of the Socialist Party, particularly in UP. But they were greatly disillusioned when they found that the results were quite contrary to their expectations and estimates. Their calculations proved wrong because they had attached undue importance only to one fact of the situation, namely, the growing unrest in the country and estrangement of the people from the Congress. The Socialist Party hardly had time to organise itself when the elections were announced. I would attribute the failure principally to paucity of workers and to lack of experience of organisational work of elections. Though the lost ground is slowly being recovered and though the situation has much improved as is evidenced by the results of Town Areas elections and Assembly bye-elections and Corporation elections in Bombay, yet these two deficiencies have not been made up and still continue to disturb us.

I am convinced that so long as these two factors operate we cannot hope to make any rapid advance. I have no doubt in my mind that the situation is most favourable to the Party and if we only know how to make use of our opportunities we shall easily earn rich dividends. Even as it is, my analysis of the election results, when all factors have been taken into account, is not so disappointing as it looks on the surface. In spite of all the initial disadvantages, we could secure in a few constituencies as many as 38, 42

and even 43 per cent of the votes polled. In other constituencies our candidates secured from 24 to 30 percent, while it was only in a very few constituencies that we lost heavily or forfeited our securities. This is certainly not a bad record and if the system of voting had been the same as it is in the city of Bombay, we would have certainly won the same percentage of seats as we did in Bombay. Nothing succeeds like success and however sober our analysis may be, there is no doubt that for the moment our defeat at the polls had a devastating effect on the public mind.

SPLIT IN LABOUR RANKS

In our brief recapitulation we have to refer to this major event of the year. It attracted wide attention and had its repercussions on the whole county. Our defeat, however, did not unnerve the Party workers of the province. To the contrary, it provided us with an incentive for more active work and gave us a correct appreciation of our strength and weakness. We became conscious of our shortcomings and realised that our influence and prestige were only inflated due to our association with the Congress.

Such a lesson was absolutely necessary and though our loss was only temporary, the loss of the Congress after our separation was permanent in one respect. It permanently lost its national character. Its present status has been reduced to that of a political party and it can no longer claim to be the sole representative of the Indian people. The struggle of ideologies has reached a higher stage; the labour movement has lost its unity. The Congress, which had formerly no use of labour and peasant organisations, today feels the need of controlling these organisations in the interest of the Government. The labour is thus split up into three organisations and it is no longer possible to keep labour organisations independent of the Government and political parties. The same pattern is emerging in the international field. An international organisation which is independent of Governments, political parties and ideologies is not in keeping with political realities, and, therefore, this conception cannot be achieved in fact.

CONGRESS—THE PARTY OF “STATUS QUO”

With the Congress enthroned in the seat of power, new-fangled theories are being propounded. The right of workers to strike is sometimes denied and legislation is being enacted to declare certain strikes illegal. The Government is equated with the people and it is said that there should be no strike in the services and industries controlled and directed by the Government. Even the need for an opposition and constitutional freedom

is denied in the name of the Indian genius. The Congress has become an adjunct of the Government and has, therefore, lost its freedom to initiate social struggles. Its chief function today is to act as a brake on people's movements in the interest of the Government.

The Indian movement wants to attain new heights; it is struggling to achieve a new pattern and structure of social and economic life. The Congress mouths radical phrases and says that it is pledged to establish a classless society. Its President goes so far as to prophesy that in the next five years India will, through a bloodless revolution, achieve a socialist state. But in practice it belies all its professions and has failed to give the people a sense of new direction. It seems to have lost faith in the masses. It believes more in legislative action than in a people's movement to renovate and re-educate itself. It has no conspicuous achievements to show, nor has it carried through any social changes of importance. It is true that it has ably handled a few problems that suddenly overtook it as a result of partition. It has kept the dark and reactionary forces in check which threatened to overwhelm it.

These forces try to raise their heads again and again and though they have received a temporary set-back, we would be deceiving ourselves if we were to believe that they have been destroyed for ever. Their foundations are still secure and the trends and ideas which nourish these forces still continue to fascinate the mind of the immature youth. It is certain that they will continue to appear again and again in new garbs unless we do something positive to eradicate this poison from the body politic. The antidote is a powerful cultural movement which will enthrone reason and enlightenment in place of superstition and mediaevalism. These forces of reaction cannot be isolated by extending to them an invitation to join the Congress. The Congress is growing more and more static and has no capacity to neutralise these forces by bringing them under its discipline. It is a facile way of thinking that if they liquidate their separate organisations and join the Congress, they will add to its strength and will make it invulnerable. There is no doubt in my mind that if this process is started, it will lead to further disintegration of the Congress.

The central question is, whether the Congress is sincere about the achievement of its new objectives. Sardar Patel is reported to have said that the present Government is incapable of introducing a plan of nationalisation of industries. This is sober truth; all else is cant and hypocrisy. And because it is so, it is crystal clear that this Government will not make any serious effort to achieve a new pattern of economic life. It has decided to maintain the status quo; classes of wealth and privilege will have nothing to fear from it. The anxiety of the capitalist class about its

future, therefore, is either feigned or is due to the fact that it gets confused and muddled by contradictory statements of prominent Congress leaders. The plain and obvious truth is that Congress has become a conservative force and no amount of pious declarations can change its character. A classless society cannot be ushered in by vapoury nothings. Declarations of socialistic objectives only serve as a mask to cover up the true character of the Congress. The discrepancy between its profession and practice cannot deceive intelligent persons. It is wrong to think that Socialism will grow out of the dominant nationalism of the Congress by a single process of declarations and speeches. Energetic social action and organisation of the proletariat is needed to awaken it to its new destiny and long period of apprenticeship will be necessary for it to qualify itself for taking its new role to establish a classless society. Without the participation of the masses no revolution can be achieved.

The path on which the Congress is travelling will lead to a *cul-de-sac* and will not enable it to solve the urgent problems of today. The argument that there is no difference between the objectives and policies of the Congress and those of the Socialist Party is, therefore, of no validity. An organisation can become a fit instrument of social change only if it satisfies certain conditions. These conditions are not being fulfilled by the Congress.

The Congress represents dominant nationalism and has totalitarian propensities. This is why an invitation to join the Congress is issued to all and sundry. It does not care to examine the ideology or the past record of any particular group before admitting it within its fold. Its one anxiety is to stifle all opposition and to liquidate all independent *focii* which may have the ambition to challenge its authority. It will gladly share power with reactionary and communal forces if they give up their separate identity and become amenable to its discipline. One simply shudders to think as to what will happen to the Congress if this consummation takes place. And yet the Congress President makes bold to say that we shall have a classless society in five years' time.

COMMUNISTS NOT REVOLUTIONARIES

My esteemed friend, Rammanohar Lohia, coined a new word '*crisism*' during the UP election campaign. This neat epithet sums up the trend of the usual speeches that are being delivered by Congressmen from day to day. It is the burden of their song that their newly-born State is surrounded by all sorts of dangers, and that therefore behoves every citizen to be loyal to the Government and to offer it his uncritical support. Some of these dangers have already been overcome. But, fortunately for them, new dangers are always arising. The latest is the danger of Communism. We

are told that China is collapsing, that the Red Danger has already reached our borders and that if a change-over takes place in India, it will be the Communists that will come to the top. In my opinion, it is a clever piece of propaganda calculated to frighten conservative elements of society and those political parties which pledge their support to democracy and are opposed to totalitarianism. It is also generally believed that the middle-of-the road parties have no future before them and in this category the Socialist Party is also included. This is a mistake that needs correction.

I do not regard the Communist Party as the party of the extreme left. The party of the extreme left to me is that which has the wisdom and the courage to advocate and introduce revolutionary changes in society to secure social justice and equality. A totalitarian party is not a socialist party, though its social objectives may be the same as those of the other. The method of work of a political party is not a negligible factor. It has to be taken into account in assessing its place, because ends and means are interwoven and cannot be separated from each other. Communism is not pledged to democracy and has no respect for those values which are so essential for the development of human personality. It ridicules parliamentary democracy for the survival of which it fought so hard during the last war. It has no use for a code of morals and will not hesitate to have resort to methods of doubtful morality if, for the moment, it better serves its ends. Again, it is tied to the chariot-wheel of the foreign policy of Soviet Russia and, in furtherance of its policy, it will break the territorial unity of its own State or even subvert it. For these various reasons, the Communist Party cannot be regarded as the party of the extreme left. It is the Socialist Party which is such a party, because, while it has a deep and abiding faith in democracy, it has accepted the objective of introducing radical changes in the economic structure of society. Again, it is not a purely parliamentary party. Its revolutionary traditions and its work among the masses are a guarantee that it will not lose its revolutionary character.

LESSON FROM CHINA

I think it is relevant to examine here the proposition that the Communist Party stands the best chance of coming to the top in the country. This belief is cherished by a large number of people who do not care to examine the question in detail. Communist victory in China has sown this illusion in the public mind. People forget that there is a world of difference between conditions prevailing in these two countries. Due to prolongation of war over a period of sixteen years, China has been continuously in a disturbed state and its economy has been dislocated. As a matter of fact it has not known peace during the last forty years.

In India, on the other hand, law and order have always been maintained and administration has never broken down. War never came to the gates of India and we did not suffer that devastation and destruction of human life and property which became the normal feature of Chinese life. In China, again, there was a Communist State which was ever enlarging its frontiers and was competing with the Kuomintang for supermacy. In India, it is only a party without any mass influence. Economic conditions in India have not so much deteriorated as in China, and the inflationary trend is not so pronounced. The administration in our country is not so corrupt and the army and the police have remained loyal to the new State.

One important factor in favour of the Communists of China is that for the people there are only two alternatives. They have to make their choice between the *Kuomintang* and the Communist Party. There is no other alternative before them, as other political parties are tiny groups with no mass base. There is no doubt that, as compared with Chiang Kai-shek's administration, the Communist Government of China is any day better. They have abolished feudalism and have distributed land amongst tillers of the soil. They have also modified their theories to suit Chinese Communism conditions and it is for this reason that Chinese Communism is sometimes known as 'agrarian communism'. It is also not certain whether Mao Tse-Tung will necessarily play a second fiddle to Soviet Russia. In India, people have a wider field of choice. The Socialist Party has a mass base both amongst workers and peasants. It has captured the popular imagination and has thrown up a few national figures who command respect and affection of the people. It is a growing party and if its inadequacies and shortcomings are made up, it bids fair to compete with the Congress for political power. Some people have even suggested that when China becomes a Communist State it will send its armies to India to help the Communists in gaining political power. Nothing can be more fantastic than this.

The new Communist State will have many domestic problems to settle. It will be engrossed in its own affairs and the problem of establishing law and order will not be an easy one for it. It will be in its interest to be on friendly terms with its neighbours, and if India recognises the *de facto* new Government of China, it will have to reciprocate and may even go the length of asking Indian Communists to behave better. In no case would it be in a position for the next few years to lend support to the ambitious schemes of Indian Communists.

There is one more factor which has also to be taken into consideration if we want to assess the Indian situation correctly. The Indian Prime Minister is not so rigid and inelastic in the formulation of his policies as his counterpart in China has been. I persuade myself to believe that in the

moment of crisis, if he feels that only radical changes in the social system will save the situation, he will not hesitate to take the necessary step. There is a great difference between the two leaders both in outlook and ideology. Thus, on due consideration of all the factors, I have come to the conclusion that Communist hegemony in India is a far-off event. Political frustration in this country is fast changing into political disgust and apathy, and this is why critical thinking is so rare in this country. This is a dangerous situation, but it can be remedied if the Government introduces a new spirit into the life of the people. This spirit of indifference has to be combated and people should be encouraged to take active interest in political affairs. The sullen mood of the people should be changed into one of friendliness and this will be possible only when the basic problems of food and clothing are satisfactorily solved, and constitutional freedom is granted to criticise the Government without fear of molestation and harassment.

FIGHT FOR DEMOCRACY

In this context it will not be out of place to discuss the question of democratic freedom in this country. Unfortunately, democracy is not rooted in the soil. It is a way of life and in a country where democratic habits and traditions are practically non-existent, it is only by continuous effort that a democratic climate can be established. Communalism is its greatest enemy, and it must be rooted out if democratic way of life is to succeed. As a result of communalism, our political thinking has become distorted and much of our traditional thinking which has no relevance to our modern problems has received an exaggerated importance. A revivalist movement, it should be clearly understood, will be of no help to us in understanding and solving our present day problems. We are living in a period of rapid social change and the situation is ever making new demands on us. We are every moment compelled to make readjustments to new environments. In this age of science and technology, political and economic organisations are becoming more and more complex and we cannot direct and control them with the help of outworn formulas of a bygone age.

If we want to survive in the present age we shall have to accept those social and political values which are so essential for a modern society. One of these values is democracy. It means the respect for the common man and a belief in this capacity to contribute to the life of the nation. The common man is not an inert mass which may be despised and disparaged. He is capable of initiative and make positive demands for action in times of emergency. Those who are wedded to democracy will not ignore and despise the common man. They will educate him and enable him to express his will and exercise his right to criticise the administration. Unfortunately, the attitude of those in authority is not helpful. The

Government does not tolerate any public criticism of its measures. The attack on free expression and organisation of opposing views hinders political progress. Freedom of speech, writing and association should be guaranteed and assaults should not be made on these basic rights of a free community under one pretext or another. But in spite of constitutional guarantees, we find that the spirit of democracy is being stifled and civil liberties are being trampled upon.

There is no organised public opinion to lodge a powerful protest against these onslaughts. The apathy of the people makes authorities all the more irresponsible and irresponsive to the feeble voice of justice that may be raised here and there. One does not object to the arming of the Government with special powers if the consent of the people is available in times of emergency. But it is not desirable that in the name of communal peace, when none is threatened, prohibitory orders should be promulgated from time to time, restricting the inherent rights of the people for an inordinately long period. If the Government is true to its profession it must give proof of its anxiety to observe the democratic procedure and respect the constitution. Bounds of democracy have to be increasingly enlarged, instead of being restricted.

NEED FOR EDUCATION

In this connection the role of education has to be emphasised. It is through education that democratic habits can be cultivated amongst the youth of the nation. That section of the youth which has come under the baneful influence of pernicious doctrines has to be re-educated and a climate of democratic thought and emotion has to be established in our centres of education. Universities can play a prominent part in this new role. They should become centres of creative ideas where the *alumni* come in close contact with their teachers and there is a constant inter-change of ideas between them. For this very reason, educational institutions should not be divorced from life and it should be recognised that a policy of splendid isolation is positively harmful.

Discussions over current problems should be encouraged and teachers should have the right to participate in the social and political life of the community. Universities should play an important role in combating totalitarianism and the destructive influence of such doctrines. They should uphold democracy and prepare young men not only for their calling but also for discharging the obligations of citizenship. They should teach them to think clearly and boldly and to accept the truth whether it is palatable or disagreeable. Education is a continuing process; frontiers of knowledge are ever widening; new facts and new principles are being discovered and new

sciences are being developed. It is, therefore, necessary to recondition the mind from time to time so that one may not lose the quality of social awareness which is so necessary for human progress.

The courses of study should embrace both sciences and humanities. A scientific attitude of mind should be cultivated and the importance of social and spiritual values should be brought home to the youth of the country. We should not forget that it is development of science and its application to social problems that has made it possible for us to socialise culture and banish poverty. In ancient society when it was not possible to radically alter the economic pattern of society, good-hearted men who felt keenly for the poor and the oppressed could only preach to the rich their social obligation towards them. It is science which has created for us these new human values which can secure social justice and equality. Socialism would have remained a dream and would not have become a world-wide movement, which it is today, if science and technology had not made an age of plenty possible. But scientific attitude has to be reinforced by faith in human values, so that science may not be prostituted for ignoble ends. Scientific knowledge must be placed at the service of the community for beneficent purposes and for advance of civilisation.

*The Caste System and Democracy**

Democracy is a matter of practice and tradition. We cannot hope for the emergence of democracy in our country until we are able to eradicate the false beliefs and loyalties sustaining the present social order.

If we want to establish a strong State, we shall have to organise society on the basis of equality. If sovereignty resides in the people, we shall have to vest the common man with effective power—and whichever link of the chain is weak shall have to be duly strengthened. Indeed, social harmony can be established only through a powerful social upheaval and without social harmony it is impossible to build a powerful State. Unfortunately, our leaders do not think it necessary to lay stress on democracy in practice outside the legislatures. Those who are at the helm of affairs in our country tend to trust only the police, the army and the bureaucracy. As such they show little enthusiasm for proposals to associate non-official agencies with the task of promoting national reconstruction. Apparently our path is not strewn with flowers. We should, therefore, keep before ourselves the saying that constant vigilance is the price of liberty.

In the years to come, we shall have to give the fullest attention to both our internal and external problems. Thus, the centrifugal forces within the country cannot be controlled by violent means; instead, it would be necessary to resolve them by meeting the legitimate aspirations of the people whom these forces represent. Various divisive forces were hitherto held under control as all our attention was concentrated on winning our independence. But now these forces are very likely to come into full play. In fact, we can already see the beginning of such tendencies. Thus, for example, differences have already cropped up among Congressmen over the future of Bombay. One group wants to include it in Gujarat while the other wants it in Maharashtra. Indeed, we have to find a sympathetic solution to the separtist movement of the aboriginal communities by

* *Presidential address delivered at the 7th Annual Conference of the Socialist Party, held in Patna on March 6, 1949.*

accepting the principle of regional autonomy within the provinces. Moreover, there is the danger of rivalries among the various provinces. We shall have to use all our intellectual resources to resolve the disputes arising out of these provincial rivalries. Above all, we have to find a solution to the twin problems of hunger and poverty.

Now, we have to see how we can lay the foundation of a strong nation. Surely, we cannot think of such a nation without modern industries. But we have to make a new beginning altogether. We can hardly make any progress without popular co-operation and we should use all the power of our people in this great task of reconstruction. We should stimulate their interest and enthusiasm for it. All this is not possible until the government is able to generate a new sense of confidence among the people. It has not only to promise economic progress and social welfare, but it has also to provide concrete proof of social advancement. Only then can our people be expected to face all their difficulties.

We have before us the example of Soviet Russia. Under the inspiration of Lenin, the new governmental decrees in that country had created such a psychological climate that the workers began to throb with new life and they felt that they must work positively for their national reconstruction. Thus, the Soviet people cheerfully bore innumerable hardships in the hope of a bright future. Hence, if we want to unite the people and invoke their co-operation in preparing the foundations of a new life, we shall have to follow the Russian example.

In this national task we are sure to obtain the hearty co-operation of the depressed classes. Moreover, we can fruitfully use their collective power only if we let them feel that the present discriminatory social system would very soon come to an end. We must assure the people that the nation accepts their undeniable importance and that they are themselves a leading component of our political order. Moreover, we have to keep in mind the fact that in the present age it is necessary to lay special stress on the equality of opportunities with a view to achieving economic progress. As a matter of fact, happy living is not possible where there are wide inequalities, especially economic inequalities among different classes.

Thus, it is absolutely essential to end social inequalities for the proper evolution of a democratic order. It is unmistakably clear that democracy will be crippled and the present evils of our social system will tend to become permanent if we proceed to implement the slogan of the Hindu State. This will lead to a reactionary attitude, so that every effort would be made to prevent the development of the economic ideals of democracy. Revivalist efforts are bound to prove fatal. Moreover, the reactionary viewpoint which harks back to the past, instead of looking to the future is bound to crush the new social outlook for which we stand and which alone

can give a new direction to the people's will.

We have to protest those new social and cultural ideals which have come into existence after a prolonged struggle by the people. We should not waste the lessons of the last two generations, for we have learnt during this period to follow the larger nationalism of Mazzini against the narrow chauvinism of Hitler. We always tried to ensure that our nationalism should never degenerate into an aggressive narrow chauvinism. In the present age, nationalism has been tending to become increasingly intolerant. Hence, it is all the more necessary for us to remain fully vigilant.

We can derive the utmost benefit from the co-operative movement in spreading the democratic practices in our society. Such a social arrangement strengthens local initiative among the people, organises them on the basis of equality in the direction of social welfare, and helps in the evolution of democracy. Indeed, under the moral impact of such a popular arrangement, we are sure to derive great help in establishing a democratic society consisting of free individuals. In addition to this, we should make every effort towards the social, economic and cultural advancement of the backward classes. Only by these means can we remove that terrible social disharmony which has tended to defile our present social system. At the same time, it should be an important duty of the State to provide equal opportunities for advancement to every community.

*Why Mass Party**

We cannot prove equal to the task if we do not throw our doors open to all those who subscribe to the constitution and programme of the Party. We should affiliate to the Party all those Trade Unions, and *Kisan Panchayats*, Socialist Youth Leagues, Co-operative Societies and other similar organisations which accept by a resolution the programme and policy of the Party. Individual members who accept our socialist principles and agree to abide by the disciplinary rules of the Party should also be admitted. In the present situation when owing to the deteriorating economic situation, even the black-coated classes are joining ranks of workers, we shall not be taking too great a risk in admitting members of these classes to our Party. Some risk is, of course, involved in taking middle-class men into the Party. But with a little discrimination and caution we can certainly avoid that risk. It is clear that we cannot admit those who are rank communalists or who represent vested interests unless we are sure that a real change of heart has taken place and they have wholeheartedly accepted the socialist philosophy of life.

The General Secretary of the Party has produced an able document in which he has thoroughly discussed the question of Party constitution and a draft constitution has also been prepared embodying the new principles. I am not unaware of the fact that on this question opinion is sharply divided, though I know that it is generally felt that some change is necessary. Some people sincerely hold that indiscriminate admission of individual members is not altogether free from risks, and they are violently opposed to any change in the constitution which may have the ultimate effect of undermining the revolutionary character of the Party. I shall not discuss here in detail the pros and cons of this aspect of the problem. But I cannot refrain from observing that a tendency is visible in the Party which resolutely sets its face against newcomers in its excessive desire to keep the

*Speech delivered at the Annual Conference of the Socialist Party, held in Patna, 6 March, 1949.

party' a close preserve for themselves. It is an unfortunate development which must be combated if the Party is to grow. Accession of fresh blood should always be welcome. The Party cannot be allowed to become the monopoly of the few and every genuine Socialist has the right to be taken into the Party. Such a narrow attitude would be a betrayal of Socialist cause. It is nothing short of self-conceit and over-weaning pride which betrays such a lamentable lack of appreciation of reality of the situation. It is a plain truth that unless the Party assumes a mass character it cannot perform the tasks which it has set before it.

CONSTRUCTIVE WORK

Again, the Party organisation needs overhauling. There is no satisfactory co-ordination of work amongst different units of the Party. A system of inspection has to be instituted in order to supervise the work that is being done by various units and to activate those that are lying dormant. New centres of work have to be started and *Kisan Panchayats* have to be strengthened. The importance of constructive work in this connection needs to be stressed. Intensive work in selected areas is much more desirable than merely propagandist work carried out over a wide territory. The latter is the type of work to which we have got accustomed, but it will no longer serve our purpose. Political consciousness has been created in the countryside but there is as yet no organisation which may serve as centres of enlightenment and seats of directing authority in a period of struggle. Such living centres have to be created where may be seen, if possible, new patterns of social life.

Co-operative work is very important for infusing a new life in the countryside, and it will be a great pleasure to us to see that this kind of work proves much more attractive to our Party members than it is today. We can kindle a new life into the people and re-create a new faith in them, if we, by our selfless work and constructive effort, can convince them of our bonafides and ability to implement Socialist policies. Though people gather in large numbers to hear us because we have a message to deliver, yet we have to convince them that we shall not prove false to them when in power. We can disabuse their minds by solid work and not by speeches merely. There will be a great accession of strength to our cause, and our victory at the polls will become a certainty if we broaden our Party and win the affections of the people. Work amongst the masses is our primary concern. The Party must become the symbol of people's social struggles and must express the needs, desires and aspirations of the common man. It is by the quality of our work that we shall be judged. Self-complacency is always dangerous. We should not allow ourselves to be misled by the huge

gatherings that we attract. People have lost faith in the Congress, and they come to our meetings to find out if we have anything better to offer. They come to us because we do not occupy seats of power, but they want to be assured that we shall remain incorruptible and true to our pledges when political power is placed in our hands. No verbal assurances will satisfy them; disinterested service of the disinherited and exploited classes can alone dispel their doubts.

Labour work has an importance of its own for our Party, and it is satisfactory to note that work in this sphere has progressed. A broad platform of labour has been created, and many of those who were wedded to democracy and socialism have already joined it. All non-Congress and non-Communist unions will soon combine into a mighty organisation which has been named *Hind Mazdoor Sabha*. The organisation was started with a membership of six lakhs and a half, and announcements were made by a few influential organisations to join it. There are still many unions both in Bihar and UP which, though under the influence of the Socialist Party, have yet to join it. It is hoped that the total membership of the *Hind Mazdoor Sabha* will soon come to fifteen lakhs, a figure which is much in excess of the declared total of the INTUC. I would appeal to all those unions which have detached themselves from the AITUC and have so far kept out of the new organisation to join us and strengthen us so that a healthy trade union movement may be built in this country. There is also much room for improvement in the methods of our labour work. We should also engage in labour welfare activities and train the working class to develop a sense of responsibility and be conscious of its high destiny.

FUTURE BELONGS TO US

I hope I have covered the main grounds, however briefly it may be. I am confident that the Party has a great future before it. Its potentialities are great, and if we know how to use our opportunities, we shall establish ourselves in the hearts of our people and shall grow from strength to strength. A party that is pledged to strengthen the democratic State, is opposed to the use of violent methods and wants to socialise instruments of production by democratic procedure, is just the Party which supplies the need of the hour. We are living in revolutionary times when vast sectors of people are coming more and more under the influence of Socialist ideologies. People everywhere want peace but they will welcome conflict if the problem of bread cannot be solved otherwise.

The short-sighted policy of capitalist powers makes them blind to the situation, and their acquisitive propensities and monopolistic tendencies do not enable them to realise the truth that their policies and actions, instead

of diminishing the influence of Communism, have almost always the contrary effect. Peace can be maintained and war can be avoided only if expanding welfare schemes are put into operation and, with the help of planned economy, standards of living of workers are raised, and instruments of production are reprogressively brought under the ownership of the community. Prices are soaring high, and anti-inflationary measures are not effective. The economic deterioration is exasperating the people and those who flourish in periods of confusion and chaos are bound to take advantage of the situation. And, yet, the Government is not sufficiently aware of the danger that looms large before it. They feel hurt when a charge is brought against them that they are following a policy of appeasement of capitalists and are dominated by vested interests.

But I do not see that different interpretation can be put on their policies which have been more and more amenable to the subtle influences of the capitalist class. We must understand that we cannot play with history. We should not deceive ourselves into the belief that India is different from the countries of South-East Asia. In a moment of crisis sudden upheavals take place and there is a swing of public opinion from one extreme to the other. In such an unhappy situation our task has become much more difficult. But instead of causing dejection and disappointment in our ranks it should goad us to more energetic action. If we can make our Party a real party of opposition we shall be able to provide the necessary corrective. Desperate and heroic action is not needed, but what is needed is dynamic action which may be potent enough to remove the apathy and indifference of the intelligentsia and revitalise it, and tempt it into an optimistic mood. Our masses are steeped in ignorance and poverty; they are passive and apathetic, and are devoid of all hope and ambition. But they can be moved into action if we know how to evoke their enthusiasm and restore their lost self-confidence. And this is possible if the party can create workers of character who cherish a deep faith in the principles and policies of the Party. Such faith alone can impact a new quality of life and can enable them to remain unmoved and unnerved in moments of deep crisis when there is a testing time for their faith. This is the main task before the Party and we should bend all our energies to its accomplishment.

History is on our side. The world community is in search of a new adjustment and a new synthesis. All the civil turmoil and sharp conflict that we see around us is evidence of the struggle that is going on between the old world and the new, which are contending with each other for supremacy. A new epoch is in sight and we are surely on the threshold of emancipation, but we should prove ourselves worthy of the new civilisation before the sun of social freedom can dawn upon us. In the epoch in which we live, even democracy cannot be achieved unless we agree to plan our

economy in the interest of the community. The next stage on the march of civilisation will surely be reached, provided we advance with unfaltering steps and undiminished faith towards our goal. I hope Socialist Party will acquite itself well and will demonstrate in action that Socialism and Democracy can march together.

*Concept of Liberty**

The whole question before us can be conveniently considered in its two aspects. The first is the larger question, namely, the question whether in the present circumstances of this country, it is at all necessary to place a measure like re-preventive detention on the Statute Book. Secondly, we have to consider, assuming the need and necessity of enacting a measure like this, whether the Bill that is before us does contain adequate safeguards for the person to be detained, and further we have to find out whether the possibility of any obnoxious and vexatious interference with the liberty of the person has been reduced to the minimum.

I would take up the larger question first—the question whether there is any need for enacting a measure like this, a measure which impairs the personal liberty of the subject. The general principle is that it should be restricted, abridged and curtailed only when there is absolute necessity for it. It was in this context that some of us referred the Government to the British practice and to the British principle. We asked them to draw upon the British experience, to draw upon British principles and to follow their procedure and their principles.

Before I deal with this question in detail, I would like to refer to two matters of a cognate nature. I am pained to find that the Prime Minister accuses some of us for entertaining the idea that liberty is absolute. I am not of that view and I have never stood for or upheld the view that liberty is absolute. Liberty is not absolute. Total liberty would mean the negation of liberty. It would mean inequality; it would mean anarchy and no sensible man would ever advocate a proposition like that. Every penal law, every regulation does, in some manner or other, curtail and abridge the liberty of a person. There is no doubt about it. Therefore, I would submit that when we ask the Government not to enact a measure like this in peace times, when we ask them to reserve it for war-time only, when war is either imminent or has actually broken out, or when there is internal commotion

*Parliamentary Debates (Council of States) Vol I Nos 32–38, August 6–14, 1952.

in aid of a foreign power, it must not be taken to mean that we think of liberty as absolute.

But more serious charge has been brought by the Prime Minister against some of us. I do not know against whom it was really directed. I hold no brief for all the opposition groups. They are strong enough to defend their own position. But so far as I am concerned and so far as the Praja Socialist Party is concerned, which I have the honour to represent in this House, I do not hesitate to say that it is a very serious charge. The charge is that our concept of liberty is the 19th century concept of Britain. And as every word that falls from the lips of the Prime Minister deserves our earnest attention, it has to be carefully examined. Although there are some fundamental differences between us both in matters of policy and principles, still I do retain the same old respect and affection for him. Therefore, I thought within myself whether it was really true that I had become a back number, that I had lost all touch with the realities of the situation, with the spirit of the times, that I had lost that quality of youth of which I was so proud. I thought over this matter with some seriousness.

I asked myself whether my thinking had become static, whether my social and political thinking is still conditioned by formula and categories of thought which had become effete by afflux of time. I exercised a little self-criticism. I exercised a little self-introspection. But with all respect to the Prime Minister, both as my comrade-in-arms of old days and as the Prime Minister of this great country, I say with great respect to him that on a re-examination of the whole question, I think that I cannot be accused of entertaining any such idea. I know how to move with the times; I know what are the needs of my people. I have got that quality, that art which enables me to recondition my thought to new situations, to new conditions of life in this country so that new philosophies and new ideas may be in a position to fulfil new needs and satisfy new aspirations of my people. I know that the concept of democracy has not remained static. It has been transformed during the last fifty or sixty years and the main basis of that transformation, so far as I can see it is that the political question today has become the social question. The one great effort of the nineteenth century was to separate economics from politics; but that effort has broken down today and therefore the concept of liberty has completely changed. While on the one hand it tries to expand the liberties of the masses of the people, on the other, it tries to contract the liberties, the so called rights, of the vested interests. I hold with Laski that in the present era of revolutionary changes, no liberty can be maintained unless the nation is prepared to alter the very basic foundations of its way of life. When we ask this Government to introduce fundamental social changes, to remove the great social and economic inequalities, the learned Home

Minister tells us that we should wait patiently for these reforms, that they would come in good time and that the present was not the time for them. I make bold to say that with this attitude of mind, there can be no progress in this country, and liberty in my humble judgment is in real jeopardy, because the Government is not moving fast enough with the times, is not trying to translate into action the new concept of liberty. Liberty has to be watched and this House is considered to be the watch-dog of the liberties of the people and it is the duty of this House to whom the Ministers are answerable to be vigilant in the defence of the civil liberty of the people.

But, then, as the majority of the House has decided not to do so I think the sacred duty to now hold aloft the torch of liberty in this country, now falls upon the privileged few of the Opposition. When there is gloom and darkness surrounding all round, few of us can stand forth and say that if you want to defend liberties, liberty can be saved not in this manner. In the name of security if you take away one freedom after another, the security itself would be forfeited. That is how I think, and, therefore, it is exceedingly painful to hear speeches from the lips of the Prime Minister, one after another, that ideas and principles which were sacred to us before our liberation, when we were fighting for the cause of the country's freedom, those ideas which were cherished by our people, which formed part and parcel of our being, have become outmoded and we have no longer any use for them. And at least I was not prepared to hear from him that our concept of liberty also was of the 19th century Britain, and not the modern concept. But then there is not one single concept which is followed in the world today. The concept of liberty differs from country to country. There is England; there is United States of America and when we say that the spirit of the English principle should be followed in this matter, we are told that India is not England. Our learned Home Minister told us this morning that England is a small country; its size is small; its population is small. In contrast to Britain, India is a big country, of big size and with a very large population. I do not see, how it makes a difference with respect to the matter that is before us. The matter before us is whether liberty of the subject should be respected by us or not and whether his person is sacred or not at least in peace time. That is a simple question.

Another argument that was advanced by the Home Minister in this respect was that British people are a disciplined people and he gave an illustration of this and said that on the eve of the general coal strike in 1926, Lord Simon said something which went home to the people and the strike was withdrawn. I say that if it is really true that such liberties can be maintained and preserved only if the people are disciplined, India would take many years before its people become disciplined. Why do you ask us then to extend the life of this measure for 2 years only. Why not make it a

permanent measure. Again various categories of people seem to be affected by this measure. The Prime Minister enumerated the test—first the communists, second, the blackmarketeers and profiteers, and then the goondas, dacoits, anti-social elements and then the Jagirdars of Rajasthan. The communalists are also included in the test. I would like to take them one by one.

We have, in the minute of dissent, said that the law of the land should be enough to meet the situation as against the blackmarketeers, profiteers and the communalists. If the law is not sufficiently drastic and stringent, it should be made sufficiently drastic and stringent. I have never heard of any country which has enacted such a law to meet the menace of the dacoits or the goondas and to meet the menace of the blackmarketeers and profiteers. In England also, there was an Emergency Act enacted in the year 1920. It was aimed against such class of people, the profiteers and the blackmarketeers in order to maintain supply of commodities which were essential for the life of the community. There they do not try to detain such people under an extraordinary piece of legislation. The Home Minister referred to the dealings of the Government against blackmarketeers and he expressed surprise that some of us had got a soft heart for them. There is nothing of the kind in the matter and since under Preventive Detention Act the detenu will not be brought before a court to stand his trial, I have my own fears in the matter. These rich people with big money bags would escape the law. They would never be detained. That is my fear and that is why I say that a separate measure should be enacted to meet this menace in order to ensure to the community supply of commodities, essential for life.

So far as communalists are concerned, I would not have referred to that unhappy incident which disturbed the communal harmony of the city of Delhi, but since a direct reference has been made to it by the Home Minister, I have to take notice of it. I say, it is very unfortunate that the riot took place, that there was bloodshed, that there was commotion in the city and that communal harmony was disturbed but, I would like this House, to take all the facts into consideration and then form an opinion of its own. Inter-communal marriages are not as uncommon today as they were once. People are getting used to them and I know that nobody would take notice of such marriages if they are quietly celebrated. But, those persons who arranged this marriage—I was going to say, who wanted to organise this marriage—were not evidently satisfied that no notice should be taken of it. They wanted that full notice should be taken of it. They wanted to use the marriage as a publicity device. They wanted to broadcast it, to advertise it because they wanted the world to know and to recognise their services in the cause of social reform. They are ardent social reformers burning with a desire to arrange such marriages

with the idea of establishing national solidarity and also with the idea of promoting communal harmony. I am of the opinion that such marriages are rather the outcome and the result of communal harmony. It is not like this that we are likely to promote communal harmony by promoting such marriages. If you want to promote such marriages, do so, by all means, but you would be sacrificing the happiness of those two individuals at the political altar of self-advertisement and the advertisement of the cause, if you were to use it as a publicity device.

Who does not know that when mass conversions took place and those who organised them cared more for publicity than for those people, for the spiritual comfort of those people there was bound to be communal riot and communal trouble? The Home Minister himself told us of the psychological condition, of the abnormal mental condition of the vast number of refugees who reside here. Consider the mental condition of a refugee whose girl is going to be married without his consent, without his knowledge in the city of Delhi where hundreds of thousands of refugees reside. You want to give wide publicity to the marriage and you are out for trouble and then, when that trouble takes place, you blame others for disturbing communal harmony. I think on the strength of this instance a case has not been established for the inclusion of communalists in this measure. Is it not a fact that the last General Elections have demonstrated unmistakably and abundantly that communalism in this country is on the downward trend? It could not get the support of the masses. There is no danger from communalism in this country today and if there is any danger to our secular political life, to our free political life, it is due to casteism and not to communalism, I should say. In my humble judgment, so long as the outstanding questions between India and Pakistan are not settled to the mutual satisfaction of both the countries, we shall have such sights again and again in times of crisis and turmoil. Therefore, if you want to make use of this extraordinary measure to suppress the communalists in this country, you will have to place it on a permanent basis on the Statute Book.

I think no case has been established so far by the Home Minister and the Prime Minister which might lead us to agree with them that this Act should apply to communalists. We must not forget the social fabric of Indian society. We are divided into castes; we are divided into religious communities with their narrow and sectarian outlook. That is a hard fact of Indian history; you cannot get over it. You will have to recognise it. We all stand for a secular State and I admire the steps which the Prime Minister takes to retain the character of that State as secular, but unless life is secularised by science and technology, unless reason is enthroned in place of superstition and supernaturalism, I do not think secularism has got a bright future in this country. It is a plant of slow growth. We are striving

in that direction. We shall come to that stage when India will become in the full sense of the word a secular State, but merely by repeating slogans, things cannot change in a day; you cannot change the past; you cannot blot it out of existence by an Article of the Constitution. You will have to take so many steps to promote national harmony. You will have to eliminate those causes which lead to communal disharmony and disequilibrium. You will have to take all measures which would ensure national solidarity in this country. A country that is divided amongst castes, amongst communities, can be welded together into one single nation only when you have certain common symbols, certain common objectives to fulfil, and instead of moving in that direction, instead of trying to take those measures, those healthy, salutary measures, without which there can be no secularism in this country, without which communalism cannot be suppressed and eradicated from the body politic of this country, we are trying to suppress it only by enacting such punitive measures.

I shall now take up the other category i.e. of the Communists. Is it not known to the Government—if they have made a clear and correct analysis of the last elections they must be knowing it—that people have suffered for their cause. Is it not known that persons who had been imprisoned and who had been detained for long periods without having been given an opportunity to stand their trial in a court of law, have become martyrs, have been idolised by the people? Have not millions of people voted for them? It is an important question to ask: Would you like the situation to continue? If you want the people to think calmly of the programmes and policies of different parties and then to make their choice, you will have to take out this measure from the Statute Book. I am surprised that the Home Minister—not in this House, of course, but in the House of the People—said that when he goes to villages, people do not talk about this Statute; they do not talk about this Act, the Detention Act. Is it not within our recollection that some members of the House of the People moved an amendment to the effect that the Bill be circulated for eliciting public opinion? Who opposed it? It was the Home Minister who opposed it and the amendment could not be carried, and still he says that since the people do not talk about it, it should mean that the people are in favour of the measure. He knows that the masses are illiterate; they are steeped in ignorance; they are doomed to a life of poverty and penury; they are overwhelmed with the problem of sheer survival and he still expects them to think in terms of liberty.

The idea of liberty cannot enter into their lives. There is not a modicum of culture in them; they have no leisure. It is only when their material wants are satisfied, it is only when their economic sufficiency has been achieved, they will begin to think like us—educated men—in terms of

liberty. They will then realise that liberty is really necessary for self-culture, for the development of personality. But although the villagers may be ignorant about it, they are not so ignorant as he presumes them to be. Their participation in the national struggle under the Indian National Congress has quickened their political consciousness. They are shrewd people. Newspapers go to villages. Although they are illiterate, they are fond of knowing all that is going on in this country. Many persons in villages must be aware of the fact that such a measure is under discussion in the Houses of Parliament and although many of them may be ignorant about it, the hang-over from the past continues. As in the past they followed blindly those who suffered for them, who did not care for the lathi charges and prisons of British Rulers, who entered jails with a smile on their faces, who took part in the underground disturbances of 1942 to make the rule of the foreigner impossible in this country, they will respect those people who will espouse their cause today, their petty causes, and will invite suffering upon themselves, through imprisonment, through detention. I say so long as this artificial situation continues, this artificial glorification of people who are ready to suffer for them will continue for years to come. And those parties will receive more and more votes of the people who suffer more and more for their cause. That is a hard fact of Indian history and must be recognised.

Now our Home Minister has told us that India is not England; that India is a vast country, but so far as the observance of forms of procedure goes, he is scrupulously careful, he is meticulously careful, that the forms of procedure of the British Parliament should be followed here. And did he not pull up Dr. Shyama Prasad Mukerjee one day in the House of the People when he referred to the Prime Minister by name rather than by his official designation. He is so meticulously careful about these little things. He wants that the pageant of the British Parliament should be maintained here in all its glory and splendour. But when we appeal to his common-sense, to his trained, experienced lawyer's sense and judgment and request that he should follow the British principle and practice and reserve this measure for war-time and not introduce it as a peace-time measure, he tells us that India is not England. I am afraid that in order to retain our liberties we shall have to wage a constant struggle. It was England who showed the path to other nations and it was not an easy path for them to tread. By hundreds of years of continuous struggle they achieved those freedoms; they got those values which they prize most today; and if we, unfortunate people as we are, have still to fight, even in the time of our national Government, for our democratic rights, there is no wonder at it because, by tradition, by sentiment, we are not a democratic people.

The only fact which is in our favour is that we are a peace-loving people

and there is still hope for this country that democracy will flourish and prosper. Indian life is based on a hierarchy of castes; it is based on inequalities—social and economic.

Therefore, it is an uphill task for us to establish democracy in this country. I am very sorry to say so and I say it with a sad heart that most of our friends on the other side only pay lip homage to democracy; there is no sincere desire to achieve a positive faith in democracy. We had use for it only so long as we were fighting against the British. Now after achievement of our freedom when we ask this Government to introduce a certain measure they do not like, we are simply told that as now we are free, as we have a national Government, as this Government has been installed by the will of the people for a period of five years, there is no use for such a measure and, in the House of the People, the Home Minister said that people should be law-abiding, that there should be no talk of *satyagraha*, no talk of fasts, no talk of strikes and that if people are law-abiding and do not violate orders under Section 144, there would be no need for this legislation, and he again said that this legislation has become necessary because we had abandoned our traditions and had adopted foreign doctrines and foreign paths. With great respect, I ask him to enunciate the basic principles of the ideology he subscribes to. What is that ideology? He wants to delude us by appealing to our past traditions and past doctrines. And as a sample of it he referred in the House of the People to a case of fast-unto-death undertaken by a sincere and pious man for the prevention of cow-slaughter, and he told us that revealed the genius of the Indian people, and he told us further that it was by adopting such methods, by undergoing suffering oneself and not by inflicting suffering on others, that Gandhiji led the nation to victory and after victory, gave freedom to this country.

All that it comes to is this, that those people who do not agree with this Government in all that it does, should sit quietly and with folded hands for a period of five years. Then at the end of five years they get a chance to seek the verdict of the people, and then alone will they be able to take their places here if the people want them to do so. We have to behave like good boys. That is what he wants us to do. And yet he quotes Gandhiji in support of what he says. I recollect having had a conversation with Gandhiji, the Father of the Nation. He told me that the weapon of *satyagraha* was to be used not only against foreign domination, but it could be legitimately used against one's own indigenous and national Government if there was a clear case for its use. I cannot forget those words. They are fixed in my memory. I seek solace in them. I do not for one single moment deny that those people who are dissatisfied with the acts of the present Government, who hold different ideologies, who want to transform the character of the Government, who want to give it not only political but

an economic significance, if they want to seek these changes, these fundamental changes, if they want to alter the very foundation of the way of life in this country, they must abjure violence. I agree with the Home Minister on this point. But when he goes a step further and says that all non-violent struggle should be barred, that there should be no strike however peaceful it may be, however free volition and will it may be, and when he asks us further not to take to *satyagraha* because a national Government is there like a benevolent sovereign, then I say that it is not possible. If this were to happen, this country would become a graveyard. The peace that he wants is the peace of the graveyard and not the peace of the living.

So long as India's genius is there, so long as she remains true to the spirit of the past and tries to imbibe the best that is in others, India will not refrain from taking all necessary non-violent steps in achieving the goal that we have set before us. And if that task is hindered or prevented, I warn the Home Minister that those who today have abjured violence, those who want to follow peaceful methods like *satyagraha* as taught by Gandhiji—if they do not get free room for such experiments and actions, take it from me, they will turn to the path of violence. And I warn the Home Minister to beware of the consequence of this and not to tell us again and again, in season and out of season, as is the case with so many of our leaders, that there should be no talk of *satyagraha* and no talk of fast. He eulogises a fast-unto-death, which I regard as non-violent coercion, which is, in my opinion, worse than the use of violence. I am opposed to fast-unto-death. Fast as a method of purification may be necessary. But fasts unto death to gain a political objective, I regard as coercion of the worst type. But my learned friend in his speech made on the floor of the other House praised a sincere and pious person who had taken a vow to fast-unto-death. How does it promote communal harmony, I ask in all humility and with all respect? I ask this straight question, and I want a straight answer from the Home Minister.

There are a few more points to which I would like to refer. The Home Minister has told us that we should not follow the path of foreign countries, that we should not follow foreign ideologies and that we should follow our own tradition and our genius. But he has not been kind enough to expound his own theory. He even told us that India was united, that the whole country was united for the first time in its history, and that the Indian republic of this size had not existed before, and that it is not like the tiny republics of the Buddhist period. He says that he is faced with new problems and new responsibilities. I ask him whether it will be possible for him in the light of old doctrines and old traditions to solve the new problems and to discharge the new responsibilities with any measure of

success. It is mere rhetoric. I may be pardoned for making this remark.

But no amount of rhetoric can delude us. I may be pardoned for saying that if we are to follow our old traditions and our old doctrines, we should not refrain from reconstituting the present artificial administrative provinces of India on a linguistic basis. We should decentralise political and economic power if we were to be guided by the tradition of the past. If we were to be guided by the tradition of the past, we should seek unity in diversity. But what does the Home Minister want us to do? He wants that we should praise the government of the day. He wants us to be good boys, to be law-abiding citizens, to have no other ideologies so that there may be unity in all ranks. He has invited us to join hands with him in blessing this Act. I am afraid that this unity will encompass our death, and I am not prepared for this death-embrace. I am of the opinion that freedom, if it is not true to itself, will perish. That is the saying of a great man and we should not forget it. He tells us that he was not present in the Constituent Assembly when Article 22 was being discussed. It is indeed our misfortune that he was not there. He has also told us, that the Drafting Committee consisted of great lawyers of this country. I have great respect for the class of lawyers so far as it goes. But their thinking is static. They do not think and they cannot think in terms of our changing needs and situations. They cannot think in terms of new needs and aspirations of the Indian people. They have no idea of the changes that have been introduced abroad and they are not in touch with the people and, therefore, they cannot know what is passing in their minds, what is passing in their hearts. The drafting of our Constitution was entrusted to such a body of people. It would have been much better if some laymen who knew very well the needs and impulses of our people were put on this committee and the lawyers could have been asked to give a proper form to that draft. But nothing of the kind was done. He is so meticulously careful, as I have just said, about the observance of the procedure in the House of Commons but, so far as I know, this Constitution of India is only a revised edition of the Government of India Act of 1935. And this is due to the fact that on the Drafting Committee we had lawyers of eminence, lawyers of mature judgments, but out of tune with their times and one could not, therefore, get a better result of their deliberations.

When I asked him to adopt the spirit of the British principles, he said that India is not England. It has been seen that he wants to confine the Indian soul in the British body and that Indian soul is not of that epoch when India's soul was uncontaminated, unsullied by foreign influences, when there was a flowering and outflow of Indian culture, when India had reached immense heights of civilisation and culture, when India went out in search of the infinite of immortality, of fearlessness, when India defied

death itself, He would not talk of glorious India of ours but he would adopt that Indian soul which has been sullied and corrupted by Anglo-Indian influence during the period of their administration. So far as Fundamental Rights are concerned, this Government will borrow them from abroad, from modern Constitutions but when we want them to reserve it as a war-time measure and follow British practice they rather draw upon experiences of Anglo-Indian administrators of India. They are afraid of following the British practices and, as I said in the very beginning, this concept of democracy has altered and changed its character in recent years, and it is different with different countries.

So far as the last War goes, you know that it was on the issue of fascism *versus* democracy. That democracy ultimately triumphed and since it has triumphed, it has become fashionable for all people to adopt its name while emasculating it in the process of adoption, degenerating it and vulgarising it. It has been done in many countries of Eastern Europe and I may congratulate the Government, for once, finding itself on the threshold of the Soviet camp, of the camp of countries of Eastern Europe. They have got a similar provision like this in their Constitution for peace-time also. And, perhaps, the Prime Minister, when he castigated us for subscribing to the concept of liberty of the 19th century England, had in his mind some of these Constitutions. But England and USA are not the only countries where a high regard for personal freedom has been observed.

Take the case of France. The Communist Party in France is very strong. Civil liberties of the people were largely curtailed in the course of the last War, but the regime of administrative internment has disappeared today for France. They stand in grave peril in the event of a war taking place in Europe and yet they have thought fit not to abrogate the personal liberty of the subject in peace-time. I can cite many more instances of European countries where no such peace-time measure exists in their Constitutions or in their Regulations. I, therefore, request most humbly that the Home Minister should reconsider this matter in this light. I do not question the right of this House to enact a measure of this character. But I have referred to British practices and have drawn his attention to the fact that it was only a war-time measure, so that he may think twice and thrice before enacting a measure of this character.

He has not satisfied us that an emergency does exist within the country. I know it is nowhere written in the Constitution that you must satisfy the country, the House, that an emergency exists, that a crisis has arisen. But in view of British precedents, the American precedents which provide so many adequate safeguards, where these measures are reserved for war-time only, I naturally thought that the Home Minister would very kindly go into the matter with care and perhaps come to the conclusion that this was not the

time to introduce a measure like this. He becomes a very pathetic figure, when he refers to what happened in the time of Sardar Patel, what happened in the time of Rajaji. He says that this House passed this measure in the course of four hours in the time of Sardar Patel and again he tells us that in Rajaji's time it did not take more than two days.

It perhaps took about three or four days. But the time that is being taken on this occasion is much longer and that is his grievance. Our sympathies are with him. But he must thank himself for this situation.

When Sardar Patel came before the House, he placed before the House a full picture and if that picture was true and there was no reason to say that that picture was incorrect, almost the whole House supported him, in the adoption of that measure and when Rajaji came and wanted to revive it by extending its time limit by another year, he placed certain facts and on the basis of strength of those facts he wanted the House to support him in extending the life of that measure. But our learned friend, Dr. Katju comes before us and wants to have it both ways. He wants his Government to take credit that the situation has been continuously improving since 1950. He wants us to believe that a very large number of detenus have been released and the number of detenus still in prison today, barring those who are in Hyderabad, is very insignificant and small and if we exclude the number of blackmarketeers and various other categories from this list, the number would be very small, indeed. With this statement of the situation coming from such a responsible and great authority like the Home Minister of this country, how does he expect this House to support him in extending the life of this measure not only by one year but by two years. I would very much respectfully say that he should have taken us into confidence, placed all the facts and figures before us and satisfied us that there is a real emergency to justify such a measure. Then we would have been the first to support him. But he has done nothing of the kind.

I would now come to the examination of the provisions of this measure so far as safeguards are concerned. We are thankful to our Home Minister for his accommodating spirit, for his acceptance of some of these amendments that we had the honour to move and support. He has been very kind to us and has tried to understand our point of view and has tried to meet us half way in some matters. We must be thankful to him for these small mercies.

I hope that this accommodating spirit will continue to be displayed in this House as well and he will be pleased to accept a few more amendments. He has not placed this House under any obligation. If anybody is under the obligation of the honourable Home Minister in this matter, it is the House of the People, because only a very few amendments were accepted in the Select Committee—Small amendments, not of much

consequence—but he has given certain assurances and accepted certain amendments in the House of the People which do provide certain safeguards for the subject, and I congratulate him and I pay him my humble tribute for this accommodating spirit, and I want that more of that spirit be displayed in this House in the course of the next four days when the Bill will be discussed in this House and when amendments will be moved and considered. He has suddenly turned against his own class, the class of lawyers. He says there is no use for them. Instead of being helpful in the administration of justice, they are a hindrance. I request him to abolish this class and nobody would feel more happy than myself if the class of lawyers is abolished in this country, but so long as that class exists and so long as their services are considered to be valuable for certain purposes, I do not see any reason why this request of ours, which follows the British precedent, should not be accepted. It is not a request that the accused should be allowed to be represented before the Advisory Board by a lawyer; he's simple request is that he should be given the assistance of a lawyer of his choice in the preparation of his case. That is the practice which was followed by the British even in times of war, and I see no reason why this small concession should not be given to the accused here. It is very difficult for a man who is involved in a case to look at the whole matter dispassionately; it is very difficult for a layman to marshal facts, and if the matter is really complicated from the point of view of law, he does need the assistance of a clever and astute lawyer like my learned friend, Dr. Katju. What then is the harm in allowing him to do this? I, therefore, request my friend to accept this proposal and oblige us once more by admitting that, if, in the opinion of the Advisory Board, an accused person should get the benefit of the assistance of a counsel, this concession should be allowed to him for the preparation of his case. I do realise, that a lawyer will not be able to function properly if there is no proper atmosphere for him, if rules of evidence have no application there. My friend, Dr. Kunzru, and I had therefore, urged this simple proposal that an accused should be allowed the assistance of a lawyer not in the court, not before Advisory Board, but for the preparation of his case, if, in the view of the Advisory Board it was necessary that such assistance should be rendered to him.

Then, we had also asked but without success—we could not persuade the Home Minister to accept it—that certain particulars should be furnished to the accused person, that if a person who has been detained is brought before the Advisory Board, the Advisory Board should have the right to furnish certain particulars to the detenu for the preparation of his defence, for the preparation of his representation which he is allowed under the Act to make to the Advisory Board and to the Government. I see no reason why this cannot be done. The Home Minister quoted a

paragraph from Article 22 that all such particulars as are prejudicial to public interest should not be disclosed. I do not say that all facts should be disclosed to him. I have gone a step further and said that those facts should be supplied to him without disclosing the source or the identity of persons from whom information had been obtained. I also agree that if certain facts are of such a nature that they would themselves lead to the identity of the informant, they may also be withheld. But I see no reason why those particulars whose disclosure might not be prejudicial to public interest should not be supplied to the detenu as was the case in England even during the time of war. These are the two or three amendments which I would commend to the notice of the Home Minister and I hope he will give his best attention to them and would see if it is possible for him to accept them. I would not take more time.

I said in the course of my speech that if in the name of security, freedom is attacked, security itself will be forfeited. If the Government, if the Congress party wants to fight other ideologies and other political groups who don't subscribe to their ideology, the way to fight them successfully is not to put them behind prison bars but to fight them by truth reinforced by reasoning. The Home Minister appealed to us in the name of unity to bless his measure. May I, in the name of the same unity, appeal to him to withdraw it? May I take this opportunity to appeal to the Government to try to develop a general will and hammer out a common policy with respect to those fundamental questions about which unanimity is possible. Foreign policy is one such matter; the issue of Kashmir is another. Introduction of any extraordinary legislation for safeguarding national security is another such matter, and if the Government had been of the opinion that it was useful to develop such a common general policy in as many respects as possible, it should have, before introducing this measure in Parliament, taken the leaders of the various political groups in Parliament into confidence and consulted them. If this Bill had come before the House in an improved form and if adequate safeguards had been provided in the original draft of the Bill as a result of mutual consultation between the Government and the leaders of political parties, the whole atmosphere would have changed. It would have received voluminous support both from inside and outside the House. The Home Minister has told us that there is trouble in Telengana, that there is a crisis, that abnormal situation prevails in Saurashtra and Rajasthan, and when we request him to introduce these measures in those States, he points out to us that there are constitutional difficulties. I am not a constitutional *Pandit* and, therefore, am not in a position to say anything as regards the validity or otherwise of his contention but I do hope that my learned friend Pandit Kunzru, who is an experienced parliamentarian will be able to tell us

whether there does really exist any constitutional difficulty with respect to this matter. If we are satisfied that that constitutional difficulty is there and it can't be overcome in any other manner, we may not be as critical of this Act as we would otherwise be.

*What Life Means to Me?**

Everyone must find for himself the meaning and significance of life. Life is rich and variegated. It is both smooth and rugged; it offers both joy and sorrow, victory and defeat. Variety is the spice of life and, therefore, life has many aspects. In a sense, every individual is an end in himself and must in his own way seek a full and satisfying life for himself. He has to find out his place in life and the work he loves. Only such work brings happiness as is dictated by the deep springs of his nature. Since life is manifold, human experiences are varied and each individual likes to have experiences which are deeply satisfying to him. He should not uncritically accept the traditional values of life. Life is in a state of constant flux and is ever-changing. Ideas and institutions are undergoing a change and since it is these which give us a scale of human values, these latter also are being re-defined. In our society, in which intense social change is going on, new social problems have arisen and are seeking a solution. If we want to have a happier life, less of suffering, pain and strife to which we are subjected today, we should have a new scale of social values to meet the challenge of our times. Everyone, therefore, must re-discover for himself the meaning of life. Others can only help and guide but the effort must be made by him individually.

The question is asked: What is the purpose of life? Human ends are defined as truth, beauty and social well-being. Towards the achievement of these ends, all human efforts have to be directed. If we are to avoid social disaster and enrich human life, we must regard them as worthy ends to which we should owe allegiance and dedicate ourselves. But these human ends have meant different things in different ages. They are being constantly re-defined and re-valued in view of changing social conditions. An individual is a product of his social environment and though he has to seek the meaning of life for his own individual nature, he can do so only in the environment in which he lives and within the frame-work of the human values of his time.

* Broadcast by Acharya Narendra Deva from Delhi on 29.10.1949.

In the modern age of science and technology, the problem of organisation has assumed a special significance. We have huge agglomerations of human beings and unless we know how to control them, we shall meet with catastrophe. Science has placed at our disposal vast resources which, if properly utilised, can wipe out disease and poverty and bring about an age of plenty. The group, the community, the collectivity has assumed a great importance in this age and unless we give up individualism of the last century and accept the principle of co-operation in place of competition, we shall come to grief and shall not be able to put to a judicious use the ample resources that science has brought within our reach.

In the present age, if we want to have a more just and humane form of society from which war is outlawed and in which people get satisfaction of their desires, we must transcend our individual isolation and selfish interest. A bright future and a happy destiny await mankind provided it can husband and use its resources for the benefit of all. The sordid selfishness of an acquisitive society and a competitive age has to be given up if society is to live. It is only by recognition of the law of necessity that we can make our individual lives happy and realise ourselves by our free development; and the law is that in the age to come only he will have a full and satisfying life who will recognise the needs of modern society and serve the whole. This does not, however, mean that an individual is insignificant or is a mere cog in the wheel and has no life of his own. He is not a slave of the machine but he can consciously direct the machine both for his individual good and for society's welfare only if he is socially aware and has rightly understood his environment and its problems and has identified himself with the life of the community. This he has to do out of his own free will and not at the dictation of others. The machine has to be run not by those who have intoxication of power but by those who have a sense of humility and a spirit of service. Willing and ungrudging sacrifice for others is a noble virtue and wins our approbation. But this is not to be equated with the sacrifice of individuals under compulsion at the behest of a dictator who will annihilate a whole race to satisfy his whims and gratify his own philosophy of power. An individual is not to be treated as an automation. On the contrary, greatest respect has to be shown for his personality and opportunities have to be afforded to him for his full development. But this is possible only when the individual realises that in an age of collectivism, when we stand on the threshold of a new humanist culture, we can achieve our destiny only if we alter our conceptions of morality and human behaviour and regard collective morality as a *sine qua non* of all human progress. We must realise that in the fulfilment of the whole lies the fulfilment of the individual and with this realisation we should feel joy in becoming the conscious agent and creator of a new

society in which millions of human beings will for the first time in history realise a decent human existence. Millions who have been living a mere animal existence for ages will be transported to a new place and will achieve a new freedom. What has been taken away from the individual will be given back to him; his self-alienation will come to an end.

But to achieve all this, a new race of men who will form the *elite* of society will have to come into existence. They will be the pioneers of a new age and civilization. They will need a new understanding of the environment, a new social awareness of the critical situation in which humanity finds itself and of its proper remedy. The crisis in the spiritual domain is much more serious. It is essentially a human problem. The material conditions for ushering in a new society based on equality, social justice and peace have come into existence. Only, man has to learn how to manipulate and organize these resources for the common good.

The modern social system has enslaved man by turning him to a thing by devitalising and depersonalising him. Today an individual has become a mere adjunct of the machine. A worker is not the owner of his own instruments of labour. He has no joy in his work. It is a dull and drab existence for him. He is deeply conscious of his insignificance—he feels as if he has no role to play in the scheme of life. This leads to a growing sense of frustration and consequent apathy and indifference to social problems. This unhealthy situation has led to the popularity of creeds and philosophies which instead of seeking a solution of modern problems and giving us a clear understanding of the present crisis, only serve to confuse and mystify. They do not give us a new inspiration and faith for overcoming the crisis. War-torn people feeling helpless seek consolation in old religions and philosophies which have lost their significance in the new set-up, or turn to new philosophies which make them only pessimistic and cynical. It is distressing that many humane and sensitive people who could be expected to guide the new movement of social reconstruction have run away from life and have taken refuge in some religious mysticism. Let us dismiss from our minds philosophies which take a gloomy view of life and which make us cynics. We in India are accustomed to such pessimistic schools of philosophy which tell us that life is an empty dream, that is unreal, and which preach the gospel of salvation for crossing the sea of life of misery and suffering. Such philosophies and disciplines will do us no good. Man who has conquered and controlled nature will refuse to believe that extinction is his destiny and will not be deterred by the vastness of the problem that lies before him. Frustration and cynicism are only a temporary phase and surely man will rise above them, and will take a robust view of life and not throw away the opportunities which he has today to become the architect of a beautiful and happy society. He will not

hide his face and take shelter in a past that is fading out before our eyes and does not offer us clues to the solution of problems which confront us today.

Our outlook on life and universe has lost its unity. In the sphere of education a division is made between natural sciences and humanities. As knowledge is not unified, our thought-pattern is not of a single piece. The result is that while a scientist takes a rational view of things in his own sphere, he takes views on other matters on trust from tradition and makes no attempt to apply scientific principles to other fields of human experience. An organic unity of scientific social analysis with ethical ideals has, therefore, to be achieved. Application of sciences to social problems will then cease to be amoral and our equipment of scientific knowledge will be utilised for the achievement of the common good. Again, common people should be made conscious of the modern trends of society and be told that it is only by co-operative efforts and by subordinating one's narrow selfish interest to the interest of society that conditions of good life can be created for all.

A full life is possible only in a form of society where an individual has full and free scope for expression of his moral, mental and artistic life. A material basis for such a society has first to be laid and a healthy environment has to be created so that the common people may be saved from the dread of poverty and insecurity. It is only in such an environment, free from fear that a new civilisation can grow. Humanity is about to take this next big step in the historical development of the human race and those who have seen this new vision of a better world from which slavery and exploitation have been banished will have only one supreme interest and passion in life, *i.e.*, they will utilise all their energies and use of their talents for the service of humanity as a whole. Men of vision and understanding will enter upon their task with a crusading spirit and spread everywhere the gospel of human unity and co-operative effort. All racial and national barriers have to be demolished and humanity has to feel its kinship if it has to save itself from utter annihilation. We are privileged to live in an age fraught with immense and rich possibilities for the common good and those who have the eyes to see can clearly see the outlines of a new movement going on under our very nose. We have to make our choice between two alternatives: whether we shall serve humanity as a whole or will serve only our narrow and sectional interests. True life today means to me an active participation in a purposeful movement of social reconstruction for the common good.

*The Right to Strike**

There is great scarcity of houses in England these days. The poor are homeless all around while many army camps and some flats of the rich are lying vacant. It was suggested to the authorities to acquire and allot these houses to the poor. But they have paid scant attention to it. When the poor saw that no provision was being made for their housing, they started occupying these vacant places. Surely, this action is unlawful. However, the poor are left with no other option. When the authorities do not listen to them and go on putting off suitable action, it is their right to force the hands of the authorities through *satyagraha*.

Similarly, there are occasional strikes in England which cause great inconvenience to the people. These strikes do not take place on the advice of the trade union authorities and as such they are deemed to be unlawful. However, the strikers maintain that the machinery established to resolve labour disputes is so slow-moving that it is simply intolerable. Moreover, the workers complain that the trade union authorities are often immersed in routine administrative problems, so that they tend to forget what used to happen to them when they were workers themselves. In consequence, these authorities are no longer aware of the genuine problems of the workers and as such they have lost the confidence of the workers. The workers believe that this entire machinery has to be given a jolt for once and that the authorities can be made active once again only through *satyagraha*. Under the circumstances what we need today is to transform the industrial and labour conciliation machinery and not to punish the strikers after branding them rebels.

Lately, there has been a spate of strikes in our country, too. But it would be a mistake to think that all these are communist-inspired. The workers in our country are poor, economically, and they are suffering from many difficulties. Frequently, their unions are not accorded due recognition. It is the job of the authorities to listen to the workers' complaints and make

*From *Rashtriya aur Samajvad* English translation by Dr S.C. Gangal.

suitable laws to remove their grievances. Surely, every strike causes inconvenience to some people. Moreover, strikes tend to halt production which further aggravates the people's sufferings. But, then, what is the remedy? Strike is the only weapon through which the workers try to obtain relief from their sufferings. Strikes are the very basis of the trade union movement. If we take away this weapon from the workers we would be doing injustice to them and would render them altogether helpless.

The principle of collective bargaining has been duly accepted. When the legitimate demands of the workers are consistently ignored, and when all their prayers go unheeded, the poor workers are left with no other option save strike. When they are completely ignored, they occasionally stage peaceful demonstrations with a view to attracting the attention of the authorities. At this stage they are arrested and told that their demands would not be considered until they return to work. We fail to understand why the government should dread these peaceful demonstrations? Everyone has the right to strike and stage peaceful demonstration. We reject the view that this right is inapplicable under self-government. Civil liberties cannot be forfeited by projecting the bug—bear of law and order. Certainly, law and order should be established. But it would be wrong to sacrifice civil liberties for its sake under ordinary circumstances. Communal riots are a different matter. It would be improper to compare them with strikes and other peaceful demonstrations. If the government takes care of the workers' interests, there may be virtually no need for strikes and demonstrations. However, it has been our experience that the best of governments has to be pressurised into doing its duty and, as for the millowners, it would be absurd to expect any justice from them.

Moreover, experience tells us that newer and weaker unions have to struggle very hard for sheer survival. Even for their smallest demands *vis-a-vis* the millowners, they have to threaten a strike and often resort to strikes actually. The owners always look down upon the unions and tend to regard them as a source of danger. In our view it is necessary sometimes to resort to struggle for the sake of democracy. And it would be wrong to brush it aside as revolt or rebellion. Indeed, the right to peaceful *satyagraha* should not be taken away if we want to prevent the widespread use of violence. It is an effective device to impress on the authorities their sense of duty and to drive away their inertia. We wish to assert in all humility that this right should be upheld even after the attainment of independence. Let us do nothing to invite our opponents' taunt that we are ourselves doing the things for which we used to condemn the alien rulers in the past.

Compulsory arbitration has been devised for resolving the disputes between the millowners and the workers. Nowadays, people have a

tendency to depend on the State and it appears that our faith in the democratic processes is being increasingly eroded. For, we want everything to be governed by the laws. But laws alone cannot ensure industrial peace. On the other hand, it is liable to aggravate the disputes. The workers are apt to be driven to violence to escape from this state of inexorable compulsion. If the decision of the court is not to the workers' liking, they will oppose it and will be compelled to go on a strike against the government. We should in fact devise a system that should ensure the workers' cooperation and not drive them to revolt.

The American President, Truman, has gone to the extent to ask the Congress to make a law whereby the workers could be compelled to stick to work at the point of bayonet. He wanted for himself the powers which had not been given to any President before. He demanded that in the event of a strike, he should have the power to acquire any business and to declare a state of emergency. After such a declaration, he can forfeit profit, imprison the recalcitrant labour leaders, abrogate the right of the workers and compel them to return to work on fixed wages. If the workers refuse to comply they can be conscripted into the army and subjected to the military laws as soldiers. After conscription the workers could be compelled to work in the factories on the soldiers' wages. And if they still went on a strike they could be court-martialled.

This amounts to the strangulation of democracy. This makes the workers worse than serfs. Indeed, the labour-capital disputes should always be mutually settled. It is improper for the state to intervene in them. It is patent in a democracy that no one can be compelled to work against his will. Then how is it that the workers should be collectively compelled to go to work? Thus, the question arises as to why one cannot do collectively what one is allowed to do individually? As a matter of fact, it is contrary to the process of democracy to enforce compulsory arbitration in the sphere of labour-capital disputes.

*Religion and Socialism**

Marx regarded human consciousness as the highest variety. Like Feurbach, Marx also held the view that man made religion and it was never the other way round, and as such the concept of supra-human God was the product of man's imagination or illusion. There is no truth in it and it is merely the reflection of man's perverse imagination. To the extent that man attributes various virtues to God, he denigrates and rejects himself. Religion is a hindrance to the full flowering of human life. A religion founded on the concept of an idyllic other-world tends to make us oblivious to our present responsibilities. Present-day religion tends to strengthen superstitions and vested interests, for it regards the present social system as a permanent arrangement which is divinely ordained.

Religion wants to maintain the *status quo*. And though class struggle has been sharpening day-by-day in the present society, yet religion stands for the inviolability of the present order. Man cannot develop himself fully or find his fulfilment in the present socio-economic order; yet religion supports and bolsters this social order. Religion, through its false conception of an omnipotent God, tends to weaken man, and it stands in the way of man's self-respect and independence; moreover, by isolating man from the hard realities of life, religion forces him into a world of sheer imagination, so that man's innate consciousness is never able to develop itself fully. Thus, man is groaning under the crushing weight of religion. Socialism presents the correct perspective of religion and thus it helps release man from the thralldom of religion and enhance the dignity of man.

Religion defiles and disintegrates human life. In the same way, the capitalist order destroys the dignity of human labour. In this process the worker is isolated from the means of production. His labour is kept on the market to be bought and sold like other commercial goods. The worker or labourers has no right over the product of his hard labour. Thus, the worker is cut off from the products of his labour. Apparently, this sort of labour is

*From *Rashtra aur Samajvad*, English translation by S. C. Goel

not natural for the labourer, so that he lacks all interest in it. This is never a labour of love for the worker, nor does it contribute to his physical or intellectual development. Only it injures his health and saps his feelings. Hence, the labourer's experience of his individuality always comes to him from his life outside his work. This kind of work divorces man's individuality from his physical existence. The more he works, the more he contributes to the strengthening of the outside world. At the same time, his own internal world becomes increasingly impoverished and isolated. It is this labour which leads to the creation of private property but all the product is owned by those who themselves produce nothing. This is the basic fact of the capitalist economy.

Engels had, therefore, advised labour to make their creative or conscious contribution to the process of production in keeping with their humanity, and not like degraded agents devoid of all social consciousness, for thus alone could they help end all the unnatural contradictions of the capitalist system. For the same reason Marx had declared that the regeneration of human society could be brought about only by means of such reorganisation of the social forces which would make man the master of all those resources and impart new life to him. Socialism, therefore, stands for the abolition of private property, for it isolates man from his labour. Society can be endowed with genuine humanity only through the abolition of private property. And thus alone can man consciously realise his true human potentialities. Hence, socialism is essential for a healthy human existence.

Many of our economists endorse capitalism. They lack the knowledge of history. They are mere economists. They are unable to see that man establishes a set of relations as the powers of production expand, and that the form of this system of relations positively changes when the powers of production undergo further change and expansion. The social relations arising from the present system of production can continue only so long as the present system lasts. The laws of economics which these economists have devised are not universal or unchangeable. They apply only to the present system and their validity is confined to a particular stage of the historical process. These laws of economics reflect a stage of social relations which is transitory. As soon as these relations change, these laws will also change. Hence, it would be absurd to regard these laws as permanent. If these laws were permanent, there could be no possibility of social and economic progress.

The present society is marked by dislocation and lack of order. Man fights against man and there is all round strife. After the breakdown of the feudal order the primary powers are moving in an uncontrolled fashion. And though man appears to be free, he is in fact a slave. Certain social

organs have been separated from him, as for example property, labour and religion. He mistakes their unbridled movement as indicative of his freedom. But in fact this unbridled movement indicates his slavery and his isolation from genuine human existence.

The political freedom of man in a capitalist state is confined to his enjoying the formal citizenship and membership of the capitalist society. Modern State acknowledges the ordinary rights of man. The State does not politically recognise private property, for it takes no account of personal property in respect of the right to vote. Moreover, the State ignores the differences of birth, education and profession, for it gives equal political rights to all. Also, religion is not supposed to interfere with State policy. Nevertheless, a developed State chiefly reflects the social life, and not the material, physical side of human life. When the State acknowledges the ordinary rights of man, it only concedes his existence and the freedom of the mental and physical organs of human life within the capitalist order. Hence, the State does not release man from the shackles of religion, it only leaves the individual free to choose a particular religion for himself. Similarly, in conferring the right to vote it does not take into account the differences of property, birth and profession. However, this arrangement does not lead to the abolition of private property. Political liberty indeed does not make man free. Man can be free only if his life is not disintegrated and when his mental and physical organs are not separated from him. In other words, he can be free only when he is able to function as a social being and when he can organise his natural powers like the social power, so that there is no separation between the social power and the political power. Therefore, various specialised branches of knowledge, which study man in isolation from his organs, are apparently meaningless in the larger human context.

Though Marx was the greatest votary of humanity, he did not indulge in a sheer flight of imagination. He took the concrete reality of this world as the basis of his research, and did not conceive of an idyllic, imaginary world of his own. He draws the old world from darkness to light. By analysing or examining it, and by formulating the principles of historic evolution, he seeks to discover it. All the prevailing philosophies offer ready-made solutions to the riddle of life. But Marx has no advance explanation valid for all times. He considers it his job to make a critical review of the present world; and he does it most relentlessly. He is not afraid of consequences or of having to clash with the powers that be.

It is his view that society is the key to an understanding of the process of historical evolution. Man is social and he has no existence outside society. The foundation of every social system is its process of production and exchange. What will be produced, how it is produced, and how the produce

is exchanged—it is these things which determine the nature of distribution and the class structure in society. Thus, the final causes of social and political change should not be sought in the minds of man but in the forms of production and exchange. In other words, these causes will be found in the economic structure of an age or period, and not in its philosophy. It is being increasingly realised that present social institutions are not based on justice or reason. It points to the fact that silent changes have been occurring in the methods of production and exchange which are not in accordance with the social order. It also makes it clear that the remedies for the evils that we have discovered are also present in some degree or the other in the newly-emerging productive system. These remedies have to be sought and discovered in the present productive system, and not to be invented from our minds or imagination.

The present social system is capitalist. As this system develops, it leads to an intensification of the struggle among the powers of production and the means of production. This struggle is not willed by anybody, not even by those who seem to be generating it. The means to end the evils of the present system is the proletariat. While capitalist production leads to the concentration of property in the hands of a few capitalists, it also helps create the proletarian labourer. The proletariat is a universal or all-pervasive class of the capitalist society because its suffering is also universal. It does not ask for any particular right because it has not suffered any particular injustice. Instead, it is the very symbol and incarnation of suffering. This class makes no appeal in the name of any traditional rights. Instead, its appeal is in the name of humanity itself; and it cannot attain its salvation without carrying the other classes to this end. Indeed, it is a class which has been deprived of its human character, so that it can realise itself by fully rediscovering its humanity.

The proletariat lacks consciousness. But it would have its salvation only when it becomes aware of the conditions which can gain for it its humanity. The doctrine of socialism can become a force only when it is able to influence the people and is accepted by them. In other words, a principle or ideology can become a reality only when it is able to meet the people's needs. Therefore, the Marxist ideal cannot be deemed to have been attained until the proletariat as a class ceases to exist.

*The Role of Intellectuals**

Democratic socialism stands for a classless society. But it recognises the need of a variety of vocations. It is opposed to the domination of any profession and favours the free co-operation of different sections of the working people on terms of equal justice to all.

In the category of the working people are included not only wage workers and salaried workers, but also independent workers, such as peasants, herdsmen, artisans, artists as well as intellectuals engaged in socially useful professions.

Indian socialists are fully conscious of the importance of independent vocations. They have increasingly emphasised the social urgency and economic necessity of the invention of small unit technology and the development of medium and cottage industries on co-operative basis. They urge co-operation, not because they wish to deprive independent workers of their freedom, but because in co-operation lies the salvation of small unit economic enterprises. It was co-operation that enabled Scandinavian peasants to pull through the economic crisis of the thirties of this century and to organise their dairy industries on sound foundations. Co-operation alone will enable cottage industries and small unit enterprises to flourish in India.

Democratic socialism is opposed to the idea of technocracy and managerial domination over industry. It believes in industrial democracy and is not prepared to stand technocrats' dictation of society or managers' despotic rule over industry. It stands for workers' active and creative participation in social management. But it finds no antagonism between manual work and technical skill. It regards their proper co-ordination as very essential for industrial development. It encourages workers to acquire technical skill and wishes them to welcome and be helpful in technological development. Technicians, it holds, constitute an integral part of workers'

*The above article is based on by presidential speech at the annual conference of PSP held in Gaya on 28 December, 1955.

Managers and technicians should cease to be agents of capitalism, fraternise with manual workers, and conjointly with them build a socialist economy.

As builders of socialist economy they are sure to be more respected in a socialist society than they are in the existing society. They have now to function as agents of capitalism, subserve the exploitation and submit to the whims, fads and dictates of functionless capitalists who have arrogantly assumed the role of captives of industry. Socialists have no doubt in their mind that it is more human and dignified to be a co-partner in a social enterprise than to be a subordinate agent of a private enterprise. They also hope that if managers and technicians cast off their superiority complex against manual workers and try to work with them as co-partners in a common enterprise, manual workers would respond to their spirit of fellowship and cooperation and would cast off their own inferiority complex which is mainly the product of the capitalist system.

Socialism has never thought and could never think ill of intellectual professions and pursuits, indispensable as they are for civilised social life. Socialists neither value knowledge for its own sake which some liberal thinkers profess, nor agree with Plato's conception of the supremacy of knowledge, which demands the absolute control of the entire political power by a philosopher who cannot be a toiler. They are also opposed to the monopoly of knowledge and intellectual professions and pursuits by a particular class or section of the people.

But knowledge is rated high by them. They definitely stand for its expansion and universalisation and wish its maximum application to needs of life. Unity of knowledge and labour is an important principle of socialism. It means that avenues of knowledge must be open to manual workers and their children, that their social origin must not debar them from intellectual advancement, that adequate facilities be provided to them by the community in their pursuit of knowledge. It also means that there should be proper co-ordination of general education and vocational training, that every child should have basic training both in citizenship and some useful profession or vocation. It further means that even ordinary manual work should be as skilful as available knowledge can make.

Last but not least it means fellowship between manual workers and intellectual workers. Socialism stands for classless society and this cannot be realised unless the two realise their oneness. To achieve it, the people will have to cast off their social prejudices and inhibitions and break the social crust which has tended to separate the two for ages. It is sure to be facilitated by social mobility between the two groups and the cultural advancement and the social upgrading of manual workers. The process has begun. The two groups have ceased to be exclusive. They overlap and tend

to intermingle. The skilled labour of certain categories has acquired a sort of party with the intellectual work of certain types. While modern technology has made it difficult to draw a hard and fast line between the two, increasing facilities of intellectual advancement have made it possible for manual workers and their children to cross over the line and join intellectual professions and pursuits.

This process of the social assimilation of intellectual and manual workers deserves to be welcomed and consciously promoted, as it leads to social harmony and helps in the enrichment of intellectual life and will enable intellectual professions and pursuits to enlist mass social support for their advancement. Nothing will be more harmful to social progress in India than a perpetual feud between intellectual and manual workers. In days of democracy the intellectual group can cherish the spirit of exclusiveness at its own peril. Such a spirit is sure to isolate it from the rest of the community, rob it of its claims to social leadership, and is likely to deny it even the opportunity of self-perpetuation.

In the past the intellectual life of India suffered from exclusiveness which caused stagnation and decay. For its invigoration it needs expansion and wide contacts. Its expansion and democratisation, instead of lowering intellectual standards will, enrich intellectual life. Democracies of the world have amply proved it. Socialism has in no way been solicitous of the advancement of knowledge and intellectual pursuits. It has decidedly been more generous in the allotment of funds for them and has held intellectuals in higher regard than capitalist democracies. The elimination of capitalism and consequently of the capitalist class is sure to upgrade intellectuals socially. In a free socialist society their stature is bound to be higher than what it is under capitalist democracies. This can be noticed even in the Soviet Union, where unfortunately dictatorship has denied to them necessary intellectual freedom, imposed on them politically determined truths and suffocated the intellect with indoctrination. But democratic socialism cannot be accused of such perversions, as it stands for freedom of thought and is opposed to dictatorship in any form or sphere. It wishes intellectuals to cultivate wide human sympathies, to be purposive in their intellectual pursuit, to be solicitous of social goods, but assures them full intellectual freedom.

When democratic socialism wishes intellectual workers to realise their oneness with manual workers, it does not wish the former to adopt ways and manners forced on the latter by capitalism. It, on the other hand, intends to raise manual labour to the level of a profession. It requires industry to be informed by a principle of public service, which is integral to the idea of a profession. It wants industrial workers to evolve their code of honour and observe it faithfully. It hopes that in a socialist society workers

will realise that their criterion of work is not financial gain which may accrue, but that the end of their work is to serve, and that they will be prepared to subordinate their personal interest to the achievement of that end.

Socialist society will not allow any one to charge exorbitant fees for their services and to amass inordinate wealth, but on the whole the standards of living of those engaged in intellectual professions and pursuits will be much higher. There will be no unemployment, and the social security measures will relieve them of the worries they have to face in case of sickness, births and deaths in the family and of personal incapacity for work due to ailments, old age or some other reason.

Socialists, therefore, invite those engaged in intellectual profession and pursuits to cast off their vacillation which has caused the disintegration of their personality, throw in their lot with the toiling masses, and conjointly with them build a democratic socialist society in India.

*Transition to Socialism**

Our society is divided into classes. Its economic system has placed the owners in a position of power in relation to the non-owning workers and it has also enabled the former to dictate terms and exact a toll from the latter. It has produced a clash of interests which has generated class struggle and class consciousness. Class struggle is, thus, rooted in our present system of production and is primarily generic in character.

Class conflict is a perpetual phenomenon of class society. It goes on in some form or other so long as society is rent into classes. All sections of society somehow get involved in it. In class conflict the role of different classes is determined by their position in the existing economic era and the prospects in the new one. Those who are oppressed under the existing mode of production and have better prospects under the new one stand for the change and can play a revolutionary role. Those who occupy positions of dominance under the existing one stand for the *status quo* and play the conservative or reactionary role. Intermediary classes, who are comfortable but not oppressed under the existing system and are likely to gain as well as to lose under the succeeding one, tend to play the reformist role and vacillate, in case of intense class conflict between the oppressor and the oppressed classes. Remnants of classes which were dominant in the past under some old mode of production play in general a conservative role.

In this class struggle socialism definitely stands with the oppressed classes, because it is convinced that their cause is just, and that the new economic order is needed to promote progress and prosperity of the nation and to ensure to the toiling masses equal and ample facilities for the enjoyment of a decent cultured life and the free development of their personalities. Socialism strongly holds that the class struggle of the oppressed classes is as just as the national struggle for freedom against

* Report of the National Conference of the Praja Socialist Party held at Gaya, Bihar December, 1955. Prof. Raja Ram Shastri read the presidential speech at this conference owing to Acharya's illness.

foreign domination. Any radical transformation of an economic order has never been automatic. Even when economic conditions are ripe for the change, it is resisted by the dominant class. History does not record a single case where an entire class of people, in response to moral appeal, so changed its outlook and attitude as to allow the liquidation of its dominance and privileges without some sort of pressure and conflict. And there is no reason to believe that Indian capitalists would prove more human than their comperes in the rest of the world. This does not mean that the moral justification of the claims of the oppressed classes is of no significance. It has its own importance in social dynamics. It elevates the tone and temper of the struggle, infuses moral earnestness and spirit in oppressed classes and makes them increasingly conscious of the higher moral purpose behind their day-to-day struggles for justice, enables the socialist movement to interlink these struggles of different sections of the oppressed class in a big revolutionary movement for the transformation of the entire social order, and secure for it the moral support of the intermediary classes and even in the active support of declassed members of the dominant class and of that section of intermediary classes which has always responded to moral causes and provided both social theorists and necessary leadership to revolutions. This also enables the common man to realise that the struggle is against the iniquitous system and not against individuals. A moral agitation can, however, serve its revolutionary purpose only when it is an aid to a revolutionary struggle.

It is often maintained that the phenomenon of the Welfare State completely negates the validity of class struggle. But it is a misreading of the social dynamics of the Welfare State. In the USA, the Welfare State is largely a product of economic crisis which started in 1929 and failed to be resolved through usual capitalistic processes. But in Europe the Welfare State as well is the product of the class struggle of the organised labour. No Welfare State has ever been a free gift of the capitalist class or a product of its imaginative sympathies or moral consciousness. In the USA, the capitalist class continues to hold the position of dominance and there is nothing to make us believe that it will consent to the liquidation of its authority through a process of class collaboration. But for the countervailing power of the organised labour, American capitalists would have been more exacting and less responsive to reason. It is also obvious that if capitalist economy is to be replaced by socialist economy, American labour would have to think in terms of the conquest of power and to develop political solidarity and class consciousness.

So long as American labour is satisfied with its role of a pressure group, it will continue to be ruled and exploited by the capitalists. In Norway and Sweden, the Welfare State is founded on the conquest of power by

politically conscious labour. There, the capitalist class has ceased to be dominant, trade union movement is interlaced with the political labour movement, and so socialist transformation of the Welfare State is possible through the democratic process. Still, even there socialist forces cannot afford to be complacent and friendly to the capitalist class; solidarity and class consciousness of the working classes will have to be preserved; their capacity to face counter-revolutionary forces will have to be strengthened; the policy of increasing control will have to be followed; and their onward march towards a socialist era will have to be continued with determination and vigour.

The acquiescence of capitalists in Scandinavia in social welfare economy must not lead us to believe that they would stand the entire liquidation of their economic power even without the democratic pressure of the working classes. As a matter of fact, capitalists have begun to use social welfare economy as a buttress of inequality, an embankment against socialisation. In Great Britain, Australia and New Zealand, anti-socialist forces have been able to combine and reassert themselves against organised labour and arrest the march towards socialism. In these countries workers cannot afford to reduce their ability to resume their fighting posture in face of the attempt by Conservative governments to undo achievements of Labour governments. Trade union power and political solidarity of the working classes will have to be increased; they will have to be made conscious of the difference between socialist economy and social welfare economy; their spirit of revolt against the capitalist system will have to be reinvigorated; the agricultural masses will have to be made conscious of inadequacies, inefficiencies and injustices of the capitalist system; and a forthright attack on economic inequality based on the ownership of capital will have to be launched.

The Praja Socialist Party, in its basic merger agreement, has affirmed that "non-violent class struggles such as *satyagraha* and strikes are also necessary methods of democratic action." It has condemned as anti-democratic such efforts of the Congress governments and leaders as were intended to deprive peasants and workers of their right to *satyagraha* and strike. The Party has always tried to secure justice to them through other peaceful means, but has never hesitated to organise and participate in *satyagraha* and strikes, when other available methods had failed.

The Congress Party upholds class collaboration and condemns the idea of class struggle. It holds that *satyagraha* has no place in a democratically organised State, that strikes have no justification in a system of planned production and distribution, and that industrial peace is needed for economic reconstruction.

It is easy to be eloquent over industrial peace. But it cannot be achieved

in an economic system based on the exploitation of man by man. The type of industrial peace which the Congress Governments have imposed on industrial workers is hardly commendable. It has failed not only to secure to industrial workers a share in profit and management in industry but also to guarantee to them security of employment as well as fair wage and humane treatment. It has not been able to invoke in them the sense of security and fair treatment, and hence incentive for maximum production. Nor has it succeeded in inducing capitalists to be more concerned with the economic development of the nation than with their private gain. The industrial peace of the Congress Governments is but a truce. It has mainly benefited the capitalists and is bound to be short-lived as it has failed to resolve the basic conflict.

The Congress Governments have not so far devised any scheme of equitable distribution of the national income and has not been able to introduce a system of planned production in the industrial sphere. Our industrial development continues to be largely determined by the whims and vagaries of Indian capitalists. Under such conditions, workers cannot reasonably be asked to forego their right to strike. So long as exploitation and oppression prevail, *satyagraha* and strikes will continue. The suffering masses of India are bound to resort to these means. Gandhiji never meant *satyagraha* to be used only against foreign domination. He advised its use even against economic exploitation and for the establishment of a classless socialist society. Free collaboration for the common good is always just and proper. But collaboration with injustice or at the cost of justice is hardly moral. If fight against injustice is moral, the class struggle of the oppressed classes against economic exploitation is also just. In uniting workers for the purpose of class struggle, socialism undoubtedly achieved something of permanent spiritual value, as it has raised a mass of men, whom it found in a state of brutalising servitude, to the level of combatants in the fight for rights and justice, aroused in them a sense of dignity and freedom and made human emancipation from oppression and exploitation possible. It is this class solidarity which compelled the capitalists to accept the idea of collective bargaining with organised labour on terms of equality.

To some trade union leaders class struggle is essentially and exclusively economic in character. They believe in direct economic action under trade union leadership and have no faith whatever in organised political action.

The importance of class solidarity in the economic sphere cannot be over-emphasised. A strong trade union movement is a prerequisite of success in class struggle. Day-to-day class struggle against exploitation and inhuman treatment can be carried on only under trade union leadership. Sabotage may be an expression of workers' enmity against capitalism. But it hardly adds to their strength, solidarity and morale, while the constant

efforts of deceit, entrained in many forms of sabotage, have a vitiating effect upon the morale of the workers; the destruction and irritation caused by them tend to alienate intermediary classes, and hence to isolate organised labour from the rest of the community. Peaceful strikes are, no doubt, valuable means to compel capitalists to yield to organised labour their legitimate demands and to add the vigour of class struggle. But they are not sufficient by themselves to liquidate capitalism, or to secure to workers general and social recognition of their economic rights. For, that the conquest of political power by the toiling masses is very necessary. Without effective political programme and organisation of their own, the working class movement may function as a countervailing power in the economic sphere and as a pressure group in the political sphere. But it cannot have any effective voice in determining social objectives and in transforming the economic order.

Some socialists condemn rigid constitutionalism and hold that only an armed insurrection can lead to socialism. Both rigid constitutionalism and armed insurrection have to be condemned. Democratic means cannot be identified completely with constitutional parliamentary means. They do include peaceful means of resistance such as strikes and *satyagraha*. The success of parliamentary means requires as much economic solidarity as political solidarity of workers. Without the former the latter can hardly be achieved. Fabianism became a vital force in British politics only when it was interlinked with the trade union movement and only to the extent it cast off its prejudices against workers' struggles. Even in democratic countries with strong constitutional traditions, the possibility of unconstitutional counter-revolutionary activities cannot altogether be ruled out. Capitalists may refuse to remain loyal to constitutional procedure when its application may lead to the liquidation of their economic power. So democratic socialist forces may have to face an unconstitutional counter-revolution not only through constitutional means alone but also through peaceful and non-violent direct action such as *satyagraha* and strike.

It cannot, however, be maintained that democratic means which include parliamentary struggle have not in any way advanced the cause of socialism, and that violent means alone are effective to bring about socialist transformation. Terroristic action and conspiratorial violence are only infantile maladies of anarchism and frustration. They are condemned by responsible socialist leaders of all shades of opinion and do not form part of socialist strategy. Nowhere in the world has democracy succumbed to a revolutionary insurrection of socialist character. Working classes have always preferred democracy to chaos and foreign aggression and have, therefore, invariably supported democratic governments against insurrection and foreign aggression. Between the two world wars democracies had

no doubt succumbed in counter-revolutionary insurrections of fascist character in certain European countries. But this must serve as a warning to those who talk of a socialist insurrection in a democratic country. It indicates that the cause of the socialist revolution can be best served by strengthening democratic forces, that the call of insurrection in a democracy is likely to weaken people's faith in the democratic process and split democratic forces, and thereby strengthen the anti-democratic counter-revolutionary forces.

From all this, it is obvious that it will not be wise on the part of Indian socialists to strive for a violent insurrection. The Indian Constitution, which is basically democratic in character, is broad-based on universal franchise, and guarantees civil liberties and in spite of all its limitations it provides sufficient freedom to the socialist movement to grow steadily through peaceful democratic process. The universal franchise may turn out to be an instrument of emancipation. Firstly, because it provides socialists with a means, second to none, of establishing close contacts with the mass of the people, of educating them in the socialist solution of Indian problems, of exposing hypocrisies of different political parties, and of consolidating different sections of the working people—industrial workers, peasants, agricultural labourers, middle class intellectuals and handicraftsmen—in a strong socialist party. Secondly, because it will enable socialists to capture seats in the legislatures and from that forum to arraign the government for all their sins of omission and commission and to defend rights and liberties of the toiling masses. And ultimately because, through universal suffrage, a strong socialist party can capture political power which may be used to promote the cause of the socialist revolution.

It may be contended that democratic traditions are not well rooted in the country, that Indian capitalists cannot be trusted to play a democratic game, that the Congress Governments are not consistently democratic and have often ridden rough-shod over democratic ways, that the democratic process is likely to be slower specially in India steeped in conservatism. Though all these contentions are more or less true, none of them justifies Indian socialists to be undemocratic. They simply impose on the Indian socialist movement a democratic task which requires it to be consistently democratic. When it is a question of complete transformation of the socialist organisation and that of the transference of power and responsibility to the toiling masses, they themselves must grasp what is at stake and must also be in it. For that, long and persistent work among the masses is unavoidably needed. There are no short-cuts to a socialist revolution. Those who do not vote for socialism cannot be trusted to support the socialist insurrection. To mobilise democratic forces in favour of the socialist movement, we will have to be consistently democratic, peaceful

and non-violent, will have to assure democratically-minded Indians that we stand for democratic socialism, have no intention to impose any dictatorship, are determined to realise our objective through democratic means, to pursue democratic ways, to establish healthy democratic traditions in the country and to abide by democratic decisions. Democratic socialism cannot obviously afford to be indifferent to democratic forces.

It is its historic task to lead them to socialist democracy. To establish a democratic socialist order, it is necessary to interlink democratic forces with socialist forces and infuse both with democratic socialist spirit. As a matter of fact, class struggle can lead us to a democratic socialist society—classless and casteless—only when the struggle is informed by principles of democracy and equality. In this connection it must also be remembered that in India, we have a strong central government which can claim loyal support of the central army and democratic support of a large section of the people. It will not, therefore, be possible for any socialist insurrectionary force to establish its authority in any particular pocket and from that pocket slowly to envelop the whole country. Nor can it be maintained that an insurrection is necessarily the shortest and easiest route to a socialist regime. For, ten years after the Bolshevik Revolution, economic conditions in the Soviet Union were much worse than they had been under the Czarist regime.

Though the importance of parliamentary work cannot be over-emphasised, non-parliamentary work deserves equal, if not greater, attention, specially at the initial stages of the socialist movement. The latter covers a wide field. It includes education, organisation, construction and struggle. People are to be educated in socialist theory and the socialist solution of Indian problems. The permeation of new thought is necessary for combating conservatism and producing a mental climate for social change. Adequate grounding in socialist theory is needed to enable the working classes to distinguish the socialist society from the Welfare State and to strive for the former even at the cost of certain immediate comforts. A clear vision, of and deep conviction in, final objectives are absolutely necessary to save the socialist movement from reformism and opportunism.

Special attention will have to be paid to organisational problems. Success needs a strong, well-knit, vital political organisation. While it must encourage initiative at lower units of organisation and enable them to discuss and communicate their views on the policy and resolutions proposed to be adopted by higher bodies, the need for disciplined functioning of the Party must not be lost sight of. Discipline is the life-breath of an organisation. Without the former the latter cannot be sustained, much less achieve its objective. So the spirit of discipline is to be infused in the members of the Party. A revolutionist's spirit of defiance

requires to be balanced by self-discipline and loyalty to the cause and the Party. Discipline is a prerequisite of success in a revolution. Without a party possessing the general confidence of the people, it is impossible to wage the struggle with success. And it will not be possible for a party to win such confidence unless its workers are devoted, heroic, self-sacrificing, honest and possess moral earnestness and deep human sympathy along with the spirit of revolt against social injustice. All these virtues are to be inculcated in active workers.

They must also remember that the purity of means is as necessary as the purity of ends. Evil means can never lead to good ends. Fair ends require fair means. Adherence to certain human values and standards of conduct is necessary to achieve our objective. Workers are to be drawn from all sections of the people, as well from the peasantry and intellectuals as from industrial workers and agricultural labourers. These workers are to be so imbued with the socialist spirit that they will under all circumstances prefer the socialist cause to their personal or sectional interests, bind different sections of the people in a common fraternal bond, educate them in socialist ideology and guide them in their march towards democratic socialism.

We, socialists, must also strive for the solidarity of the working people. Peasants, industrial workers and other working classes are to be encouraged and helped not only to consolidate themselves into strong economic class organisations but also to develop close cooperation amongst themselves. Conflicts between different sections of producing masses are to be composed and all possible effort should be made to imbue them with the spirit of common mission against exploitation and domination. Industrial workers should be helped to realise that peasants' co-operation is necessary for the conquest of political power through democratic process. And peasants should be encouraged to understand that they are also being exploited under the capitalist system, and that only under the socialist system they can have effective voice in determining the industrial policy and can claim joint ownership of the industrial wealth of the country. Co-operation and mutual consultation between different class organisations and the Praja Socialist Party should be encouraged and the two should be so interlinked that the former remain free from the control of the latter.

Socialist youths should be organised on cultural basis and their organisation should be interlinked with the Praja Socialist Party. They should study and permeate socialist ideology, cultivate socialist morality and promote socialist culture. They must also organise the study of social, economic, political and cultural problems of the country and search for their socialist solutions. They should organise sports and games, and hold

youth festivals and other cultural activities, and thereby promote free co-operation, develop their physical and mental faculties and make their life healthy and joyful. They must cultivate respect for social property as well as for dignity of labour and human personality, must be ever ready to serve suffering humanity, and must desist from undignified and anti-social behaviour. They must so act, live and work as to be builders of the democratic socialist society. Youths of today are leaders of tomorrow. They must, therefore, cultivate the quality of leadership. But both the youth movement and the socialist cause are bound to suffer in case the former assumes independent leadership. The socialist youth movement, to grow on right lines, must be an integral part of the socialist movement and must function under the guidance of the Party.

Working classes cannot be expected to suffer oppression, exploitation and injustice weakly till a socialist party acquires political power and relieves them of their sufferings through social legislation. Even in a democracy they must reserve to themselves the right of peaceful resistance against specific economic grievances and acts of injustice which authorities fail to rectify. This resistance may be in the form of peaceful strikes and demonstrations, *satyagraha* and civil disobedience. Each act of struggle should be such as to pass the test of the general aims of society and should, as far as possible, be so conducted as to enable the people to realise that the socialist system is the only real and permanent solution of oppression, exploitation and injustice. Socialist workers must take a leading part in these class struggles and their problems. It is their duty to organise peaceful resistance against injustice, to guide the struggle of the oppressed humanity and to suffer with them in their sufferings. Such sufferings will deepen their love for the suffering humanity and their determination to end exploitation and injustice, and will bind them with the common people in a bond of mutual confidence, so necessary for the socialist revolution.

Socialist workers must also attend to constructive work amongst the people. It will enable them to maintain their contacts with and win the confidence of the toiling masses, to train themselves and the people in the task of reconstruction through collective social efforts, to test their abilities in creative work and to ensure the proper foundation of a new society after the conquest of power. This constructive work, if properly conducted, will also provide them socially necessary work in full periods of a revolutionary era, and thereby save them from frustration and degeneration as well as from ill-planned struggles.

The party system is an integral part of parliamentary democracy. No party can afford to function on non-party basis on all political and economic issues.

A party owes to itself to lay emphasis on distinctive features of its policy and programme and expose fallacies and inadequacies of the stands of other parties. A party which fails to secure adequate support of the electorate has to play the role of an opposition. It is its duty to voice unattended urges and needs of the people, to expose corruptions and inefficiencies of administration and offer its own solutions as an alternative to those pursued by the government. In opposition, a party must so behave as to convince its supporters that it deserves the renewal of their confidence and to assure many others that it can be trusted with administrative responsibilities. Opposition must be vigilant and vigorous as well as dignified and discriminative. If it is lukewarm, it loses the confidence of its supporters; if it is undignified, it fails to command public respect; if it indulges in wild accusations which cannot be substantiated, it is discredited and fizzles out. Parliamentary struggle should obviously be such as to pass the test of the general objectives of the party. They must not be intended to spite the government at all costs, but to promote its own policy and programme.

The Praja Socialist Party is required to keep all these facts in mind, and so behave and conduct itself in opposition as to assure the people of its *bona fides* and capacities and to deepen the faith of peasants and workers in its devotion to their cause and interests. The party is the vanguard of the socialist movement; and it is its duty to uphold its objectives with courage and determination, and treat with disdain such cooperation with others as may in any way harm their promotion. It must preserve inviolate the independence of the socialist movement, and must not allow itself to be confused with other parties and movements.

It may, however, cooperate with them on specific issues and in constructive work, provided suitable conditions for such cooperation exist. In legislatures, it may join hands with other opposition parties in exposing inefficiencies, corruptions and high-handedness of the Government. But it shall never allow itself to be dragged in controversies likely to harm the cause of socialism or the interests of the people. It will always be prepared to offer such cooperation to the Government in parliamentary work as is expected from opposition parties in democracies, provided the Government is prepared to extend to it courtesies and rights due to an opposition party. It may claim participation in public affairs at par with opposition parties in democracies. But it will neither allow itself to be duped by general appeals for national consolidation, nor fritter away its energy in futile talks on needs of cooperation. Such appeals and talks keep people at a low level of political consciousness, give an impression that the opposition party is superfluous and tend to weaken the tempo of opposition. The Party will indeed try to cultivate a temper of peaceful relations among

different political parties so that politics of conflict may be worked out without violence.

The Praja Socialist Party is conscious that it can implement its policy and programme properly when it is returned to the legislature concerned in an absolute majority. So, it does not like to assume power unless it commands the confidence of the majority of the electorate. But in India, where more than two parties exist, it is just possible that the Party may be the largest party without being in an absolute majority. In such conditions, the Party may form the government as a necessity and try to implement its policy and programme. However, in the event of grave national emergency, the Party may agree to join a coalition government at the Centre. The question whether such an emergency exists shall be determined by the National Executive and such a decision is to be ratified by the General Council. The Praja Socialist Party shall not enter into an electoral adjustment with the Congress, the Communist Party or any communal party.

The Praja Socialist Party is conscious of the fact that the ultimate objective cannot be achieved by its government in one term of office. The first step on the road to socialism will have to be determined both by resources in man and money and by the immediate needs of the people. The Socialist Government must for obvious reasons attend to immediate needs and give necessary priorities to them. But its policy and programme must be informed by the ultimate goal. They shall, therefore, be based on fundamentals of democratic socialism.

*The Role of Ethics in Socialism**

To socialists moral law is human, social, historical. It is human, because it is concerned with human life. It is rooted in human nature and also a product of human needs and experiences. It is social, because it is a rule of social discipline and therefore a psychological creation of social man. It is historical, because it has evolved with human experience and knowledge and changed in response to historically determined needs and conditions.

A real human morality requires full social consciousness which is possible for most of the people in a real human society which is free from exploitation, oppression and domination, and consequently from antagonism which generate class consciousness. The possibility of a purely human sentiment in intercourse with others is with us today exceedingly impeded by a society founded on class antagonism and class supremacy in which we move. It cannot be doubted that in a society based on exploitation and servitude human nature is degraded. And the present economic system based on the motive of profit not only pollutes moral atmosphere and breeds moral degradation, but also corrupts and disintegrates ethics along with other social science. It has divided society into classes, generated class struggle and compelled social thinkers to be partisans.

The problem of morality must, therefore, be socially approached. This social approach does not deny the need of conscious human efforts for moral development of an individual and society. It only insists that as man is by nature social, and moral virtue is the essence of the social nature of man, an individual can develop moral personality in society and in proper social atmosphere, and his efforts must not be purely psychological but essentially social in character. It also maintains that as circumstances make man, just as much as man make circumstances, there must be a simultaneous change in human activity and the social system to secure moral development. That even in adverse social atmosphere some have

Acharya Narendra Deva's famous policy Statement Presented on 29 December, 1955 at Gaya.

developed their personality considerably cannot be doubted. But they are exceptions to the rule and only prove that humanity can produce men who can lead and help their fellow beings in developing potentialities latent in men and circumstances.

But there is no reason to doubt that the force which acts upon the minds of the people and leads them to act depends very largely upon circumstances, and that the bulk of humanity can lead real human life and develop moral personality in a good social order.

The moral code of a class society cannot claim to comprehend moral urges of the entire community. It is no doubt embodies certain moral norms, which are of enduring values and can claim to command the general acceptance of all classes. But many important moral rules reflect only social needs of the dominant class. They are intended to justify and uphold social institutions and ways of life on which its dominance is based. They are buttresses of inequality and domination. As class conflict develops, the oppressed class revolts against them, exposes their inequities and inconsistencies and refused to be bound by them. It enunciates new moral principles based on its urge for freedom and equality, and demands their general social acceptance and their embodiment in the moral code of community. Thus, a class society is faced with conflicts of moral ideals, a new orientation of moral order becomes imminent at a certain stage of social development. And if then the outlived moral standards remain in force, the society is faced with evil effects of contradictions between its ruling morals and the life and action of its members.

In this conflict socialism stands by the oppressed masses. It condemns oppression and domination as immoral, and strives for the establishment of the new moral order based on equality and liberty, the basic moral urges of the common man.

In a real human society, sociality will be sufficient to make a man moral. But in a class society, where class consciousness dominates social consciousness and selfishness overpowers the sense of social responsibility sociality needs to be sustained by the revolutionary urge of justice to the oppressed and the exploited. Without this urge a capitalist cannot rise above the morality of exploitation and a petty bourgeois cannot save himself from frustration, vacillation, and even reactionary outbursts. As a matter of fact, unless this urge is very strong and sufficiently revolutionary, a man may find it difficult to withstand temptation to serve his personal ends. The urge will also have to be stimulated in members of the exploited class. But for this urge, it would be difficult for them to stand the temptation of immediate gains and withstand privations and sufferings, which have to be faced in any struggle against the dominant class. This is also necessary to enable them to avoid conflicts amongst themselves and to appreciate

properly the value of an equalitarian society free from exploitation. In their case this urge can be strengthened by the feelings of class solidarity and by the conviction that this revolutionary urge is founded on their class interests and is necessary for their emancipation from oppression and exploitation. This revolutionary urge against injustice to be really moral must not obviously be confined to revolt against others' injustice. It must also cause repulsion against one's own injustice.

The revolutionary urge of justice is not a hot house growth. It needs for its development the experience of struggle against exploitation and devoted service to suffering humanity. And it needs for its success, besides a keen insight into the objective situation, moral earnestness, deep human sympathy, disciplined behaviour, loyalty to the cause and faith in organised efforts. A revolutionist's spirit of defiance require to be balanced by self-discipline, which needs subjective efforts for self-cultivation. Self-introspection and self-criticism are needed to maintain emotional balance which we tend to lose in the midst of conflict. The conservation of energy demands the guidance of constructive thinking. Without proper intellectual guidance, feelings may run riot and cause all sorts of conflicts, disharmonies and confusion.

The moral evolution needs as such moral attitude as participation in moral activities. Socialists must resist such old moral rules and forms as tend to perpetuate inequality, domination, exploitation and oppression. But they cannot afford to ignore all general rules of moral behaviour. This will not only afford reactionaries an opportunity to malign the socialist movement as immoral, but also make it difficult for the party to maintain even decorum and decency in its ranks. Rules of democratic behaviour shall have to be scrupulously followed and the democratic way of life to be promoted. Socialists will also be well advised to live with moral ideals for which they stand. In a class society it is not possible to practise in life all moral ideals of classless society. But some approach to them is possible. Even some proximity to them will not only elevate socialists' moral stature but also enable them to win public confidence for themselves as well as for the cause dear to their heart. Such public confidence is essential for the conquest of power through democratic process.

The moral ideal of democratic socialism is in a sense militant and revolutionary, as it is intended to serve as the motive power of class struggle, as a means to collect and inspire the forces of revolutionary classes and as a powerful lever to overthrow the existing social and economic order. But this moral ideal is not purely negative. It no doubt challenges the universal moral validity of the established moral code and strives against certain socially recognised moral norms and rules of conduct. But it has also certain positive content, on which its moral claim is

chiefly based and new socialist morality is to be founded.

Democratic socialism believes in the moral evolution of man through the ages and regards socialist morality as its fulfilment. It resolves contradictions and conflicts in moral ideals, vitalises moral principles of essentially humanistic character and preserves such traditional forms as are not inconsistent with socialism. It develops new principles of the socialist world out of the principles of the existing world.

Socialist morality is real human morality, free as it is from all compromises with egoism, class antagonism, exploitation and domination. It is founded on human sentiments of socialised humanity. It is based on the conviction that the proper growth of human sentiments and moral personality requires the social climate of free co-operation and equality as well as facilities of decent cultural life.

Swatantra, Samata and *Lokahit* (liberty, equality and common good are the basic principles of socialist morality. These principles commanded the adherence of Rishis, Acharyas and prophets of ancient times, Saints and Sufis of the middle ages as well as revivalists and revolutionaries of the modern age almost all over the civilised world. On their basis some sort of spiritual humanism tended to be evolved in India. But in the part its evolution was retarded by social norms of hierarchical nature imposed on us by economic conditions of feudal character. Today, our economic conditions require and permit a revolutionary change of socialist character in our economic order, and our social conditions require differentiation of our moral norms religious forms, composed as our society is of different religions. It is our duty to build socialist morality through the creative synthesis of democratic and socialist norms of humanist character, with spiritual humanism differentiated from religiosocial norms of hierarchical character.

Socialist morality so evolved shall stand for the reorientation of life, social and personal, on the basis of human consciousness and fellowship, the respect for human personality and the dignity of labour, national freedom and international peace, social justice and universal good, individual liberty and free democratic co-operation, the progress of humanity and the integrity of personality. The integrity of personality will consist in the sublimation of impulses and harmonisation of emotions in the promotion of '*Lokahit*', broad human outlook and its creative realisation in action, the spirit of public service and the sense of responsibility, the courage of conviction and strength to stand against social evil against all odds and circumstances. The sublimation and harmonisation of impulses and emotions will enrich human life with universally recognised moral qualities, such as equanimity, courage, fortitude, truthfulness, frankness, fearlessness and compassion. Socialism

wishes each to cultivate these moral qualities.

To socialists moral personality consists in the capacity on the part of an individual for making social good his own. To them moral action is a free action contributory to social good; moral freedom is the liberation of all powers of men for the social good; the moral life is only possible in a society in which man seeks the realisation of true joy in association with others and so promotes his betterment as a constituent of social good. Socialist morality stands for man's self-perfection to be attained through Lokahit. It requires a man to pursue not only the ideal of his own self-perfection but also necessarily that of the perfection of others who are constituents of the same moral order. It stands for liberty, not in the sense of want of restraint, but in the sense of facilities for free and happy life. It upholds equality not in the sense of uniformity in personal attainments, which is neither possible nor desirable, but in the sense of equal consideration of the basic human needs and claims of the free development of the human personality of each individual. It stands for the fraternity of all which, it maintains, if possible only in a society free from the distinction between owners and producers, and is to materialise in the common enjoyment of a common equipment provided by common and co-operative efforts. It insists on the dignity of labour as a constituent of the respect for human personality, because physical personality is an inseparable constituent of human personality, manual work like mental work is a creation and expression of human personality, and in a society mostly composed of manual workers the dignity of human personality cannot be adequately realised except in terms of the dignity of labour. When socialists participate in the struggle against injustices of exploiting classes, they fight against iniquities of feudalism and capitalism and strive for a free moral order. When socialism insists on industrial democracy and human conditions of work, it is because they are prerequisites of free moral life.

THE CONGRESS PARTY AFTER INDEPENDENCE

*August Revolution**

Q: What is your opinion about August 1942 movement? Do you think it has failed?

A: The movement has failed in the sense that it has not achieved its objective. But no sacrifice cheerfully undergone for freedom and democracy is fruitless. Our people have shown wonderful spirit during the last three years and have demonstrated to the world their earnestness and determination to achieve their freedom. I am distinctly of opinion that there has been a powerful invigoration of nationalist forces as a result of this movement. I am not one of those who take shelter behind legal niceties and indulge in legal quibblings to belittle a great movement which has undoubtedly registered India's grim determination to come into her own. While on this subject I feel it my duty to put on record my appreciation of the initiative, sacrifice and capacity for organisation displayed by students of India. As they are going to be the future leaders of the country, it is a good augury and it gives me hope that India has a glorious future before her.

Q: What is your idea about Economic Planning of India so much talked about these days?

A: I am in favour of industrialisation of India, but key industries should be nationalised while other industries should be run under State supervision and control. But this is not enough. The feudal economy should be abolished and there should be a radical transformation of the land system. I mean to say that the class of middle-men between the State and the tiller of the soil should be abolished. The productivity of the land should be

Arrested on August 9, 1942 along with the members of the Congress Working Committee and other Congress leaders in Bombay, after nearly thirty-four months-detention at the Ahmednagar Fort, Acharya Narendra Deva along with Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru was removed to the Almora Jail in U.P. They were released on June 18, 1945. Interviewed by The Leader, Acharyaji gave written replies to questions put to him on the significance of the August Revolution and on the industrialisation of the country. They appeared on June 21, 1945. The last two paras were published in the National Herald on August 7, 1946—Editor.

raised and agriculture should be organised on a co-operative basis. Debts should be cancelled and the State should organise cheap credit for the benefit of the peasants. If we claim to be representatives of the masses and want to raise their economic status, this is the minimum we should aim at to achieve in the immediate future. Every planned economy is not necessarily beneficial for the masses. The question is: who plans the economy and for whose benefit the economy is planned? There will certainly be enough room for cottage industries in any plan that we may draw. Any Government which claims to represent the nation must undertake this task. This is a simple test. A Government which fails in this test has no right to claim that it is a National Government.

The Resolution of August 8 is in keeping with the spirit of the age and recognises the demands of the hour. It sounds the note of democracy and internationalism and proclaims the supremacy of the common man. The Resolution demands reiteration today and all its aspects need to be underlined. The outlook is bright and let us not dissipate our energies in directions that are wasteful. Let us on this memorable day make a solemn resolve to implement the Resolution.

We should remember that we owe a debt to the martyrs of 1942 to accomplish the task so nobly begun by them. Let us set our hands to the great task of organisation so that when the hour of destiny arrives we may not be found unprepared. We should also have a clear conception of our tasks so that we may not only liquidate foreign imperialism but may also establish a new social order based on democracy, co-operation, economic equality and social justice.

AN HISTORIC DATE

August 9 is an historic date in the annals of India's freedom movement. It was the first serious effort of the Indian people to throw off foreign yoke. The rumblings of a people's revolution were heard for the first time in this country and it was the upsurge of a people who had seen a new vision and who were inspired by a new hope.

The people acted like an elemental force and the British rule was shaken to its very foundations. But because of certain inherent weaknesses, the movement could not achieve its objective. The movement was ruthlessly suppressed by the imperialist paraphernalia and repression and terrorism were let loose on the people. There were detentions, imprisonments, floggings, imposition of collective fines, bombings by air, murder, arson and loot and suppression of the Press and civil liberties.

The nation seemed to be paralysed in face of terrible repression and there was widespread frustration. But this mood of frustration was

*National Herald 7th August, 1946.

temporary because the nation had seen a vision which no amount of repression and police *zulum* could efface and as soon as the war was over people began to recover. The Indian National Army (INA) trials and the Royal Indian Navy (RIN) strike were significant events and they clearly proved that the spirit of revolt was not dead but as a matter of fact rekindled in the new world context of the post-war period. The forces that had been kept in check during the war under military rule were unleashed on all sides and there was a spontaneous outburst of people's revolt in many subject countries. The times are indeed revolutionary and pregnant with great possibilities. The British Empire is breaking up on all sides. It is not the strength of the British that is keeping us back from entering into our inheritance but it is lack of revolutionary determination in us that is responsible for the delay.

The majestic struggle of 1942 was the outcome of the momentous Resolution of August 8. The Resolution defines the Congress objective and lays down its policy. It not only aims at achieving national independence but also expresses the great need of laying the foundations of a new society in the new economic and political set-up that it visualises. It wants all power to be transferred to the masses. It breathes a lofty spirit of internationalism. It makes it clear that a free India would not lead a life of isolation; but she would be willing to play her part and discharge her obligations for organising the world on a cooperative basis. It proclaims that India would enter a federation of free nations and will make her contribution to world peace.

*The Communal Problem: ** *A Socialist View-Point*

The whole world is passing through a crisis and India is no exception. The crisis is so deep that every sphere of human activity has been powerfully affected by it. It has now become impossible to return to old conditions. The old institutions are crumbling on all sides and the new system of thoughts and organisations is slowly taking their place. In these critical times, if we do not rise to the occasion and display qualities of constructive ability, statesmanship and courage our whole future may be jeopardised. We are at cross-roads and one false step may lead us to the wrong path. Therefore, much would depend upon the choice we make today.

At a time when the struggle for political power dominates the Indian scene and every community is wrangling to obtain as large a share as it can, there is every danger of the fundamental issues being overlooked in the heat of communal controversy. In such an atmosphere democracy may be smothered and the common man may be forgotten. It is, therefore, necessary to serve a reminder to the people that in the present world context the cause of freedom everywhere can only be served if we show our readiness for great social experiments and for the institution of broad-based democracy. Freedom cannot be achieved and retained by those who are timid; who have narrow and sectional outlook, who are afraid of big changes and who have not the vision to see what the immediate future demands of us. Either we take big strides on the road or we take a retrograde step and go backward. There seems to be no middle position.

There are certain ideas in the air which need a critical examination. It is unfortunate that we are swayed by slogans rather than by ideas. But unless we remove our misconceptions no clear thinking will be possible. One such slogan which has impressed the public mind is the slogan of planned economy. People have somehow come to believe that there is some mystical power in such an economy. The truth is that planned economy, as such, means nothing.

*In an interview to the Associated Press of India on June 22, 1945 at Lucknow.

The question is whether the economy is being planned for the few or for the many. The German economy under Hitler's rule was a planned economy. But no one would say that it planned society for civilisation and democracy. Some form of planned economy has become inevitable and after the war no country would be able to return to old conditions. An economy which does not seek to build an equal society will lead to relinquishment of democratic institutions.

Another such slogan is the slogan of Congress-League unity which is being equated with the slogan of Hindu-Muslim unity, but it is only a snare and a delusion. Every true lover of the country should be an advocate of communal unity. Communal peace and amity are desirable things and we should work to that end. I also recognise that pacts and agreements are helpful in this task. But we should remember that unity between communities is essentially the result of a long process of integration. Pacts are, however, temporary expedients to serve temporary ends. But the unity of communities is a different affair. It is a slow and painful process.

Pacts can certainly accelerate this process but can in no way take its place. Pakistan without mutual transfer of population is no solution of the communal problem. Pakistan or no Pakistan, the communal problem will have to be tackled all the same and can be tackled only by laying emphasis on the economic issues which equally affect the Hindu and Muslim masses of the country. Their economic interests are identical and a unity can be established only on the basis of their common interests. It is through common struggle for common economic interests that the unity will be forged.

I shall no doubt welcome a settlement of the communal question with the League. But this does not mean that I should advocate unity of action in the political field. Without identity of outlook and objectives such unity will be either short-lived or will only end in strengthening the reactionary forces in the country. This, of course, does not exclude a joint front with the League on specific issues on which an agreement is possible.

I believe in communal unity and in political unity of all the progressive forces in the country. It is the progressive and not the religious or the communal character of an organisation that should be the determining factor in making alliances. I know that my view will be regarded as unorthodox in certain quarters and will not find favour with many who count today but I must not hesitate to state my views frankly on questions which agitate the public mind.

I realise the immense complexity of the present situation and I also know that no simple formula can be evolved to meet the situation. But there are always short-range and long-range policies. If we are clear in our minds as to what we have to accomplish in the interests of the masses, we may, if

absolutely pressed to do it, temporarily accept a scheme of things which we do not heartily approve. But we should never lose sight of the goal which we have to attain. We should not think that our masses are indifferent to political and economic matters. No constitution, however rigid and fool-proof, will be able to function in this country unless it seeks to elevate the common man. The masses are on the march and they will see to it that they are no longer hoodwinked and deceived.

*Revolution Betrayed**

The Congress has immensely gained in strength and influence on account of the mass struggle during 1942-43. The vast sector of the people, who were left untouched before, have been brought under its sway today and owe allegiance to it.

The spirit of freedom has penetrated the Indian Army. The army has today received a new impulse. The old barriers between the Indian Army and the civil population have broken down and the Indian Army is slowly shedding its mercenary character and is realising that it exists not only to defend the country from foreign aggression but also to liberate it from the foreign yoke. Strange as it may seem, the Indian Army today, composed as it is of various religious communities, looks to the Congress for guidance and leadership, rather than to various communal organisations. It is a very significant fact and it speaks in favour of our soldiers' political maturity. A soldier respects a fighter and despises those who indulge in mere sabre-rattling.

The national struggle is also reflected in the increasing vigour of the student movement. Thus, the struggle has given us rich dividends all round. There is unprecedented enthusiasm for the Congress on all sides and the whole country is resounding with cries of "*Jai Hind*". The slogan of "Quit India" has become our battle-cry and the August struggle is invoked again and again as proof of our determination to be free.

But the battle has yet to be won. We failed in the first round. But we must venture forth again when the time is ripe. We know the British Government has emerged out of the war as a second-rate power. We also know that it has to face tremendous difficulties everywhere in the world. Yet, we cannot be blind to the fact that imperialism knows many ways of rehabilitating itself. We must see that it is dethroned from its seats of authority. We know that without hard and intelligent work we cannot succeed. We cannot afford to be complacent. No nation has yet attained its freedom without a

* Janata Weekly, New Delhi, 10 February, 1946

struggle. The imperialist designs of Great Britain are not hidden from us. Its efforts to bolster up Dutch and French autocracies in Indonesia and Indo-China unmistakably proves its own intention to maintain its hold on its colonies and dependencies. The foreign policy of the Labour Government is merely a continuation of the Churchillian policy.

For those who are pledged to the August Resolution, electoral contests are only a form of preparation for the struggle. If we enter legislatures, it is only to make a revolutionary use of them. We shall not enter a Constituent Assembly that does not truly mirror and represent the wishes of the people and is not clothed with sovereign authority. We do not want to be dictated by others nor can we tolerate any limitation that may be imposed upon the sovereign authority of the people to frame their own constitution. We want unfettered freedom to shape our own destiny. Above all, we want the common man to speak out his mind and write his own charter of liberties.

The Congress has declared its adherence to the August Resolution and expressed its determination to translate it into action. The resolution links up nationalism with internationalism and wants to build a social order in which all power will vest in producers.

Let us examine the implications of the resolution, if we do not wish to remain satisfied with mere idealist phrases. Without the active co-operation and leadership of the common man such an order cannot be built. It would be self-delusion to think that the middle class would, after winning freedom, willingly transfer all power to the toiling masses. This has never happened in history. India is no exception. It is the masses themselves that have to take power into their hands. Those of the other classes who have identified themselves with the masses can only help them in the task but they cannot make a gift of power to the people like a Christmas one. An appreciation of this fact will compel us to change the character of our organisation. The doors of the Congress will have to be thrown wide open to peasants and workers, and such elements as are opposed to the interest of the masses will have to be eliminated. The interest of the masses will be supreme and every single interest that conflicts with the interest of the people, will have to be discarded. If this is done, class organisations may become unnecessary. But a middle-class dominated organisation cannot be expected to do this. In that case, peasants and workers should be encouraged to have their own unions and no effort should be made to control their independent organisation.

They should be allowed to organise themselves for the security of their economic class interests. Their demands should be incorporated in the Congress manifesto or its policy and its programme. These class organisations should serve as a guide to the Congress in the sphere of their economic interests. It is in this way that the Congress can voice the

economic demands of the people and truly represent their interest. The Congress can do the political schooling of these organisations and take economic programmes from them. The political and social emancipation of the people can be achieved only by such interaction.

They should be saved from all kinds of oppression and exploitation and should be organised for self-defence against anti-social forces. Thus, we shall be able to create bases in the countryside which will be the seat of power for democracy.

We have also to decide whether we accept the theory of spontaneity or are in favour of giving a deliberate and purposeful character to the spontaneous movement. It is true that they cannot be carried to a successful end without there being a trained personnel which can guide the movement and direct its course.

If the proposition is correct, the Congress has to be transformed into a vigorous and disciplined instrument of revolution.

It should become a real and active political force, enforcing strict discipline. But the tradition of the Congress and the utterances of our foremost leader would lead us to think that the Congress believes in a spontaneous movement and is averse to controlling and guiding its course. It will perhaps be nearer the truth to say that it does not advocate mass action which is of a spontaneous character. It definitely does not want the masses to seek their own path of revolution. It will remain content with some form of non-co-operation and civil resistance of the regulated type. But it is legitimate to ask whether such non-co-operation and resistance will prove effective?

In order to be effective, the Congress organisation has to be overhauled and renovated. It is becoming politically effete. It seems as if we are losing sight of our goal and are regarding an intermediate stage as the final stage of our journey. The craze for power seems to have overtaken most of our workers who are hankering after small places of influence and authority. The parliamentary programme is exercising its corrupting influence and the petty-bourgeois is rally demonstrating its pettiness. Revolutionary fervour seems to be in abeyance for the moment and there is the ugly and disgusting sight of workers jostling each other in a scramble for seats in legislature.

Lenin said about Russia that there are many people but no men. This is also true about ourselves. We have seldom taken care to look after the education of our workers. We do very little to stimulate the thought and intelligence of our workers and to educate them about the problems of our country. The efficiency of the worker must be raised and his practical ability to perform specific tasks developed. Again, the local committees have only to execute orders from above. All initiative comes from the above

and even on fundamental issues they are not consulted. Thus, they lack all capacity for independent action and are never encouraged to cultivate their own opinions.

Our work still continues to be of an agitational character though we have long passed that stage. All this must be changed. We must start a new movement for villages, which should have in view the removal of the cultural backwardness of the people, thus giving them new aims and aspirations and developing co-operative and democratic habits among them.

ADJUSTMENT—NOT SECTIONALISM

The communal problem should be tackled in a scientific manner. The issue should not be simplified by falsely imagining that the mere disappearance of the third party will automatically solve the problem, or that Mr. Jinnah is the evil genius of the League. Most of us do not know the Muslim mind nor do we make any effort to know it. We should know that there are unseen forces which are making Muslim history and it should be our endeavour to understand them. There should be an efficient secretariat at the centre for the study of problems that vitally concern us.

We must recognise that the world is passing through a period of strife and conflict and that India is no exception. A vigorous student movement is always the symptom of the lack of integration of a civilisation with the existing social structure. It reflects the growing instability of political and social conditions. The revolt of youth against all traditional authorities is not an accident and the problem is not solved by saying that the present generation has fallen low in morals. We must ask the question as to why there is such a great gulf between the old and the young and why youth stands for new ideas, standards and values?

We are at the close of an epoch and unless a new equilibrium is established and there is a new integration which is acceptable to all the important elements, the era of turmoil and disorder will continue. In such a period, only an organisation that has the vision and courage to find the greatest common measure, that can give satisfaction to principal elements and define the aims in a comprehensive manner, can successfully deal with this phenomenon. The remedy lies not in narrowing the basis still further but in broadening it and finding a new equation which will eradicate the deep causes that lie at the door. A new adjustment has always to be made when new forces are thrown up by a national struggle. But this adjustment should not take the form of sectionalism. The church should remain a church and not degenerate into a sect. It is only in this way that sectarianism can be successfully fought and the church can retain within its

bosom the different sects, which differ in certain minor points of doctrine and discipline but which all equally owe allegiance to the basic principles which the church professes and upholds.

Just a few words to sectarians. It is true that a theoretical foundation is necessary for a revolutionary movement. But we should not be dogmatic and should always be ready to learn from experience. Theory and practice are conditioned by each other. Lenin was fond of repeating an observation of Goethe that "theory is grey but the tree of life is ever green". He has also said that an ounce of practice is worth a ton of theory. Theory divorced from practice breeds a pestilence of thought. Similarly, action not informed by principles and not inspired by idealism is blind and chaotic. Besides, clarity of thought comes from practice alone and thought-forms have a tendency to become static if they are not influenced by living reality.

There is one special danger to which we are open today. Democracy does not depend only on the spirit but also on the form of organisation through which it functions. The evolution of the Congress has been more and more in the direction of democracy. But, for sometime past, there has been a retrogression. The emphasis in the modern age is shifting from the individual to the organisation and the collectivist bias is predominant. This inevitably leads to the curtailment of democracy and to the imperceptible development of totalitarian tendencies. In the name of discipline and solidarity, let us not have an exclusive and loose organisation, which may become in future a vehicle of totalitarian power politics. An organisation that fights for power will evowe its forms of the State it will found. The *Kuomintang* is an illustration in point. A national organisation, if it wants to organise democracy, will always have a place for those groups which have spiritual affinities with it and are willing to abide by its decision.

Before we can decide what the new organisational shape of the Congress should be, we have to answer some of these question. New forces have come into being. We have to take into account some new factors of the situation. A fruitful policy can be formulated only if we rise to the occasion and show courage and breadth of vision, to be able to make the fullest use of our opportunities.

Above all, let us not regard the common man as narrow and selfish. His ideology is directed to secure the general emancipation of the socially disinherited. If we want to serve him aright, let us not patronise him but set him on his feet so that he may realise his destiny and initiate a world movement of the higher culture. Let us also remember that in order to perform the task assigned to him by history, he needs courage and independence even more than he needs his daily bread.

We have suffered the agony of foreign oppression for a very long time. We have been denied all just participation in the progress of the age in

which we live. If the wrongs of the past have to be righted, if we are to obtain the privilege of free development and if we are to elevate the common man, we must acquire complete independence of our nation. But we must do it without ousting the common man or destroying the conditions of his freest and fullest development. Even while we fight for his political freedom, we must endeavour to secure to him the basis for organised efforts intended to encompass his social emancipation. Self-rule must mean self-choice and self-control even for the common man.

*The Congress Must Change**

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AUGUST RESOLUTION.

For those who are pledged to the August Resolution, electoral contests are only a form of preparation for the struggle. If we enter legislatures, it is only to make a revolutionary use of them. We shall not enter a Constituent Assembly that does not truly mirror and represent the wishes of the people and is not clothed with sovereign authority. We do not want to be dictated by others nor can we tolerate any limitation that may be imposed upon the sovereign authority of the people to frame their own constitution. We want unfettered freedom to shape our own destiny. Above all, we want the common man to speak out his mind and write his own charter of liberties.

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the cultural backwardness of the people, thus giving them new aims and aspirations and developing cooperative and democratic habits among them.

HINDUS AND MUSLIMS

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We have suffered the agony of foreign oppression for a very long time. We have been denied all just participation in the progress of the age in which we live. If the wrongs of the past have to be righted, if we are to obtain the privilege of free development and if we are to elevate the common man, we must acquire complete independence of our nation. But

we must do it without ousting the common man or destroying the conditions of his freest and fullest development. Even while we fight for the political freedom, we must endeavour to secure to him the basis for organised efforts intended to encompass his social emancipation. Self-rule must mean self-choice and self-control even for the common man.

*The Cabinet Mission and India**

Attlee's statement has been well received in India. It is, on the whole, unexceptionable so far as it goes. But, as it does not reveal the British Plan, all that we can say in its favour is that it is conciliatory in spirit and is finely phrased. Some of our leaders have made no secret of the fact that they are optimistic about the success of the Mission while there are others, whose opinions are entitled to our respect, who are pessimistic and have sounded a note of warning.

Optimism and pessimism partly depend upon the individual's temperament and partly on the individual's reading of the situation. There is no doubt that the British Government can no longer govern India by force. The balance of forces has altered as a result of the world war. Indo-British conflict is now recognised to be an international affair. The Indian problem is not a domestic problem of the Empire but has become a world problem. The rising tide of anti-British sentiment in the Indian Army and Navy which has made it unreliable and the growing indiscipline in other services, even in the police, which is generally foreign to any sense of national honour or nationalism, in consequence of the development of a new sense of national self-respect, have made it necessary for the British Government to settle the Indian question on a new basis. The whole of Asia is ablaze and British imperialism is on its last legs. An intelligent Britisher, if he reviews the present position dispassionately, will come to the conclusion that the time has come when he should divest himself of the Empire.

But men are governed more by emotions than by reason, and self-interest clouds their judgment. The British are very slow-moving and cautious. They are well-versed in the art of compromise and they proceed up to a certain point but refuse to advance further unless they are hard pressed to do so. They have succeeded so often in the past that they have come to think that they will muddle through again and avert the crisis. It is very difficult for them to follow unorthodox lines and they stick to forms and are wedded to tradition. In the case of India, the Indo-British relationship has

*National Herald, Lucknow, April 7, 1946.

been marked by a series of broken pledges which has created intense distrust of Government's intentions in Indian mind. We cannot forget that its policy in India has been one of concession-cum-repression. Even today rumours are current that the Government is busy making preparations for crushing the Indian struggle which, it fears, will be launched in case the Mission has to return empty-handed. I do not attach any importance to these rumours.

I simply mention this fact in order to show that the people are distrustful of the British intention. It is pointed out by them that if the Government were really anxious to concede the Indian demand in full, it would have proclaimed general amnesty in order to create a suitable atmosphere for a favourable reception of its proposals. It is pointed out that in England, Mosley's gang was released overnight by the National Government as soon as the war in Europe came to an end. They did not even wait for the termination of the war in the Far-East, while in India ardent patriots and beloved leaders of the people are still in prison when a Labour Government is governing England, although nine months have elapsed since the conclusion of the total war and even the arbitrary date fixed for marking the end of the war expired on April 1. The Government of India could at least set free its own detenus. They are only two in number—Jayaprakash Narayan and Rammanohar Lohia, two brave and noble sons of India, who are universally respected and loved. But the Government is wooden, unimaginative and reactionary. The British steel-frame is one of the stumbling blocks in the way of reconciliation between the Indian and British peoples.

Taking into account all the facts of the case, one would not like to be too confident. Yet we cannot decline to enter into negotiations and to reason together in a spirit of goodwill. A calm atmosphere is no doubt helpful but this does not mean that the people should not express their views frankly in a restrained manner. While it is patriotic for British politicians to be reticent and not to make comments, it is patriotic for an Indian politician to give frank expression to his views in dignified language.

I hope we should all remain firm to the last on fundamental issues. It has already been declared that no solution can be acceptable to us, which leads to *Balkanisation* of India and that the question of Sterling Balances should be settled to the satisfaction of India. It has been officially said that the Congress would not negotiate a settlement, if two Constitution-making bodies are set up. Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru has done well in pointing out that the people of the Indian states should be represented on the Constitution-making body. Attlee's statement failed to refer to the people of the states and only spoke of the princely order. The omission was significant and the Secretary of State for India has, in reply to a question at

the press conference, in effect declared that no notice can be taken of them as they have no constitutional position. It is strange that a Labour Minister proposes to ignore the claims of the people on such a specious plea. What happened if Labour got enamoured of the princely order, which is feudal in character and is a reactionary force in this country?

The Secretary of State has said in his statement that free India will also have to accept the liabilities while accepting the assets. We know that princely order is one of such liabilities. It has been bolstered up to fight the progressive forces in the country. Sacred treaty rights have been invoked to retain the order. Another liability is communal disunity which is a gift of the British rule. We propose to liquidate these liabilities at the earliest possible date. Hindus and Muslims will establish communal harmony and weld into a nation. The princely order will be abolished as it is an anachronism in the modern age. All the anti-democratic elements will have to be suppressed so that democracy may be able to function and flourish. It is, therefore, necessary that too much should not be made of the treaty rights. We know the truth about their sacredness. The Indian Democratic State should take the place of the Paramount Power in relation to the Indian states. It will see to it that the states have a democratic constitution to begin with.

The special purpose of the present article is to draw public attention to one aspect of the question on which due emphasis has not been laid. I mean the so-called Treaty of Alliance to which a reference has been made in the Prime Minister's statement.

It is a favourite British device to concede nominal independence while retaining real controlling power in its own hands under the articles of agreement. As the sting of the scorpion is in its tail, as the sting of a legislative enactment is in its rules, so the sting of a British offer of independence is in the so-called treaty of alliance which invariably accompanies the settlement. I am not maligning British statesmen when I say so. I am only citing the judgment of a well-known writer on international affairs, who cannot be accused of any bias against the British. I would like the reader to refer to the following passage in GM Gathorne-Hardy's *A Short History of International Affairs, 1920 to 1938*, a book issued under the auspices of the Royal Institute of International Affairs.

When British diplomacy with its native love of compromise, wishes to retain the substance of control while conceding the shadow of independence, it is apt to resort to the method of a treaty. In February, 1922, Great Britain had told Egypt that she was henceforth an independent sovereign state, and had proceeded to secure, by appropriate reservations that her independence should be qualified.

In order to safeguard British interests and to protect the imperial line of communication, British troops were stationed on Egyptian soil. But it was said at the same time in the treaty that the presence of British troops would not constitute an occupation and would not detract from her sovereign rights. The same method of treaty was followed in the case of Iraq and Ireland. In the latter case, there was no declaration of independence as Ireland's geographical and strategic position did not entitle her in British eyes to receive that status. Ireland was vital to Britain's security and, as such, even illusory independence could not be granted. Being a mother country, it could not be a Dominion and, as such, it was not given the Dominion right of maintaining a navy. The security interest of Great Britain was paramount and the articles of agreement that formed the basis of the treaty of alliance (1922) were dictated by this consideration. Limitations were also imposed on the raising of armaments and the training of armed forces and some of the arguments that were used at the time were ridiculous. It was said that unlimited armament and armed forces could not be allowed in the interest of Ireland herself because if both—North and South—had the unrestricted right of raising armament and forces it would provoke conflicts between them. In the case of Iraq, restrictions were imposed on her sovereign rights before it could be allowed to become a full member of the League of Nations and it was all the time being said that her sovereignty would be respected. Thus, under colour of advice or assistance or for safeguarding the British interest, military and other clauses were introduced in the treaty and it was proclaimed that independence had been granted. I do not see how this treaty can be called a treaty of alliance and, further, how it can be said to be based on independence. The treaty was obtained under duress and as they were small countries, they could ill-afford the luxury of sacrificing even what little power was conferred upon them.

I do not wish to suggest for a moment that the Indian treaty would be an exact copy of these treaties. Even these treaties have been revised from time to time and some of the former restrictions have been removed. The Egyptian treaty is going to be revised again. But I fear that some military clauses will be there for security reasons. As there is no Indian navy worth the name they will claim the right of the British navy to guard the Indian coasts as long as India is not in a position to have a strong navy of her own. They will certainly allocate a proportion of naval defence to India from the very beginning. But, as for many years to come India would not be able to build her own navy, the British navy will continue to defend the coasts of India. England would also demand, in the interest of the Empire, the possession of certain naval and strategic bases, at least in times of war. An attempt may also be made to get us to agree to the stationing of the British

troops in India for defence against foreign aggression. These claims must be stoutly resisted. The British Army must clear out of India. The Indian Army, such as it is, is good enough for us. What deficiencies there are can be made good with international cooperation. In any case, we do not expect any great power to invade India after the British quit this land. Any concession made by us regarding the Army may prove troublesome.

In this connection, it is relevant to answer the question why India does not want *Dominion Status*. The objection of *Dominion Status* is not merely sentimental. There are good reasons why India, should refuse that *status*. In the first place, India is alien to other members of the British Commonwealth, both in culture and race. Again, South Africa, which has so much colour prejudice and which treats Indians as harlots of the Empire, is also a member of the Commonwealth. A very cogent argument against it is that India does not want to be tied down to the British economic systems. It wants to evolve its own economic and social systems. It is also against becoming subservient to British foreign policy. Although the dominions have a voice in the determination of Empire's foreign policy, the instrument of that policy is the British Foreign Office. India's status and interests demand that it should evolve its own independent foreign policy. It has to play an important role in the defence of South-East Asia. It will have to work for peace not only because its traditions have been such but also because its national interests will demand the pursuit of a peaceful policy.

Free India's energies will be absorbed in the task of construction for many years and naturally an external distraction in the shape of war will postpone its social and economic progress. It will, therefore, be essential for her to live at peace not only with her neighbours but also with all the big powers. It will enter into non-aggression pacts with every country and will refuse to be involved in the wars of others. Besides, Britain's intention as regards Arab countries, Iran, Burma and Malaya is not clear. Its present attitude towards them is not a happy augury. The old power politics is still going on. England does not want to forego its oil concessions in Iran and wants to retain its strategic hold on the Persian Gulf. It is likely that it may enter into an agreement with Russia on the basis of recognition of Russia's legitimate interests in Northern Iran. They will try to maintain peace not by shedding imperialism and laying the foundations for a new international order, based on justice and equality, but by allocation of spheres of interest between rival powers by mutual agreement. This reminds us of the old pattern of 1907 when all the principal points in dispute between England and Czarist Russia were settled in a similar manner. By entering the British orbit, we shall be making ourselves responsible for all the sins of British imperialism and, at the same time, involving ourselves in England's wars.

It will be argued that for the safety of the world India's shores cannot be allowed to remain undefended. To this, my answer would be that after the destruction of Japan, there is no harm if the Indian shores remain unguarded for a short while. If England and the USA were the only big naval powers of today, India's coastal defence will not matter. Russia is a land and not a naval power. Moreover, Russia will respect India's sovereignty if the other two big powers also scrupulously respect it. It may also be pointed out that it will not take very long to have a fair-sized navy for coastal defence.

We cannot, therefore, enter into an alliance with Britain for mutual defence. It would certainly make Russia suspicious and will make her unfriendly towards us and we should not forget that Russia's friendship, even neutrality, will mean much for us in the coming days. Our interest lies in keeping out of all political rivalries of big powers. We cannot favour one party at the expense of others. There cannot be a favoured nation's clause for Britain in the treaty.

A treaty will have to be negotiated for settling certain claims of England. There can also be inserted a clause as regards trade provided the arrangement is mutually advantageous. There can also be a non-aggression pact. But there can be no treaty of alliance in the sense that India joins the Anglo-Saxon group as against Soviet Russia.

*Why We Left the Congress?**

I have been, so far, advocating that we should not quit Congress. Today I am telling you that we must get out of the Congress.

Quitting the Congress is not a pleasant affair. I have been a Congress worker for the past thirty years. I am leaving the associations of all these years. I am leaving behind good friends. Politics is a very strange thing. In politics, friends become foes.

Since 1934, I have been maintaining that the Congress cannot be an instrument of socialism.

Nor I do think that the Congress can be converted into an instrument for the establishment of a Socialist State unless it undergoes a fundamental change in its character and composition for which there is no hope. For this reason it is not for us to press for reorientation of the Congress on a socialist basis.

On the other hand, it would be unrealistic for the Congress High Command to ask us to dissolve the party.

It is not that we are in a hurry to quit the Congress. The Congress is compelling us to get out of it. Once the Congress President asked us to drop the prefix 'Congress' from our Party name. He also pleaded that our Party doors be thrown open to non-Congressmen. He suggested that this would enable us to continue in the Congress. We did all that at Kanpur. Today they have adopted a constitution which has left us no other alternative.

Gandhiji had visualised a brighter future for the Congress. He wanted to convert the Congress into a beehive of servants of the people. He wanted it to become a *Lok Sevak Sangh*. Gandhiji is no more and they have reduced the Congress to the status of a political party.

Democratic functioning has become impossible within the Congress. It has become impossible to continue in that organisation.

By accepting the Mountbatten Plan, the Congress abandoned its

*The above article is based on the Note that Acharya Narendra Dev had submitted to Gandhi in 1947 and his speech at Nasik conference held on March 19-21, 1947.

fundamentals. No doubt, the country has become free. But freedom brought a message of death and destruction. Old ills came to the surface. Never did history witness what we witnessed in the immediate post-freedom days. Religious antagonism indulged in mass murders. Communalism, backed by feudalism and vested interests, swept through the country like a blinding storm. The forces of communal hatred and passions unleashed after partition have been striving to strike at the very roots of our new-born State.

These forces of reaction must be fought to make India safe for secular democracy. Besides these reactionary forces of communalism, there are the Communists who have an utter disregard for the safety of our new-born State. Their loyalties are extra-territorial. We must fight the Communists also.

Before August 1947, the Congress was a broad-based national front. It was an idea, ever-evolving, ever-growing, and all-pervading. But today it has become a party. It looks upon independence as the end and has now settled down to taste the fruits of power. It appears as though it has now settled down to rule. It has completely identified itself with the Government. Nay, it has become subservient to the Government.

And all sorts of people have found their way into the Congress. Patriots of yesterday are being branded as traitors. The definition of patriotism has undergone a complete change under the Congress Raj.

There is a vast disparity between what the Congress stands for and what the Congress governments do. The Congress claims that communalists have no place in it. And yet rank communalists are members of the Government.

Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel assures the capitalists by telling them that Shanmukham Chetty is their representative and therefore they need have no apprehensions. He wants the Leaguers to disband the League and join the Congress. He welcomes Hindu Mahasabhaites into the Congress. He pats the RSS and welcomes them too.

By one door the Congress expels the Socialists. Through another, it admits in capitalists and communalists. God alone can save the Congress.

The Congress governments say: 'Produce or Perish'. They are demanding of the workers to make more sacrifices. How can that be? The slogan 'Produce or Perish' cannot be directed towards the workers only. It must also be directed towards the capitalists and the rich people. They must be asked to make more sacrifices. If the vested interests are prepared to advance four steps, I assure the Government that the workers will not lag behind.

We are not coming out of the Congress with broken hearts. Our ideals are different. There exists today ideological incompatibility. This does not,

however, mean that whatever we are leaving behind is all reactionary. There are still some friends in the Congress—they may be sticking to it for whatever reasons—whom we must not disregard. If there is a hope, it is easy.

When the Congress talks of secular democracy, it does mean it. We must extend our hand of cooperation to the Congress in wiping out of existence communal hatred and passions and help it to eradicate the poison of communalism. It is essential that an atmosphere of secular democracy must pervade the country if our State has to gather strength.

We are going to lay the foundation of a new life in our country. The personnel of the Services is thoroughly reactionary, corrupt and out of date. The administrative machinery—a British creation—is out of tune with the present. We must re-educate the Services. They must be made to realise that they are servants of the State and the people. We cannot do without intellectuals. We must bring them into our fold.

There are signs that the Governments are becoming totalitarian. Authoritarianism is growing in the Congress. There is a demand for a democratic, free, fearless and healthy opposition to the party in power. The Socialist Party alone can fulfil this demand. It is a challenge of history and we must accept it.

Let us not forget that the roots of democracy lie in the masses. If the people are strong, the State shall become strong.

I concede that for some time after breaking away from the Congress, we will be forced into the wilderness. But how does it matter?

The Congress is becoming lifeless. The nation is in search of a new ray of hope, a source from which hope can spring. The origin of this spring lies in the *kisans* and *mazdoors*. History has assigned to the Socialist Party the responsibility to search out this new ray of hope. Let us accept this with both hands. I am sure we will soon be able to evolve a socialist society. We will soon succeed in establishing democratic socialism. Our dream will come true.

THE ROLE OF THE CONGRESS PARTY

As we are passing through a national crisis and conditions in the country are unsettled we proposed to stay in the Congress until a time when the British troops withdraw from India and the national State is firmly established. Every Socialist is interested in the achievement of the objective and this is the reason why we should continue to be in the Congress for some time more.

It is for the Congress to decide if it wants our cooperation in these difficult times. If, however, it is of the view that our cooperation is not

needed and if forthwith it enacts a rule to the effect that the Congress should be converted into a monolithic party and that there should be no room in it for groups and parties, we shall have to come out of the Congress.

In case the Congress needs our cooperation, the terms of such a cooperation will have to be discussed. On certain conditions we should be ready to offer our cooperation. I would not insist on the transfer of certain departments of Congress activities but I would certainly demand freedom to carry on trade union activities according to our principles and methods. In particular, I would claim freedom to remain in the present TUC. I doubt the wisdom of the new move to establish a parallel organization. I am also of the view that the INTUC will be a Government-controlled organization and as such we should keep out of it. The anti-Communist obsession should be given up. I see no reason why the Communists should not accept the conditions which we may impose on them for our remaining in the TUC.

*The Opposition and Its Role in Democracy**

My eleven colleagues and I have decided today to resign our Assembly seats and as such we have sent our resignations to the leader of the Assembly Congress Party. I wish to assure you that this decision of ours to cut adrift from the Congress has been the most difficult step of our lives. We have not arrived at this decision suddenly or without due prior consideration. We have been compelled to take this decision out of a strong sense of duty and with a view to upholding our ideals. We have taken a great deal of time in arriving at it. We are fully aware of the present state of the country. We also agree that the country is passing through a period of emergency. But we are inclined to include democracy and our culture among the things threatened by the present emergency. Today there is danger to democracy and to our culture. It is beyond doubt that an Opposition is essential for the success of democracy—an Opposition which believes in the essentials of democracy, which does not want to identify the State with a denominational religion, and which should criticise the government in a constructive spirit, and not for the sake of sheer criticism.

We want to fulfil this essential task. And we crave your indulgence to say that this task can be fulfilled by ourselves alone. Unfortunately, there is no tradition of democracy in our country and instead communalism is in the ascendant. We are not used to democracy. Hence in the absence of a constructive Opposition it is very likely that the spirit of dictatorship might become dominant here.

Separation is always painful. And we have been pained by this separation as poignantly as others. It has pained us deeply. Nevertheless in the lives of institutions and of individuals it often happens that they have to sacrifice their dearest objects for the sake of their ideals. We are

*Narendra Dev's address in the UP Assembly (on 31 March 1948) at the time of his resignation as well as of his twelve other Socialist colleagues) from the Assembly, following a decision of the Socialists to quit the Indian National Congress on whose 'ticket' they were originally elected. English translation by the Editor. The last two paragraphs—which fully fit in with the continuing narrative and exposition—are from Hindi article (translated into English by the Editor).

leaving our home with a grieving heart. But we are not doing away with our ancestral inheritance. This is not a material inheritance but it is an inheritance of ideals and sacred principles. The successor to this property is never the eldest son, nor is it equally divided. The personal law of the religious communities does not apply to it. As a matter of fact the genuine claimants to this property or inheritance can only be those who prove themselves worthy of this property through their faith and conduct. There is no false pride in it. We are aware of our limitations and we are also fully conscious of our imperfections. Nevertheless, we wish to assert that we shall do our best to prove ourselves worthy claimants of it.

The history of British Parliament and of the legislatures elsewhere shows that often on such occasions people do not resign their places. We could also cross the floor and sit on the other side if only we wanted it. But we did not think it proper to do so. It is possible that with your blessings we may be able to build a little home for ourselves somewhere in a corner of this vast House. Whether this wish is fulfilled or not we shall never depart from our principles. We are aware that our country today needs constructive work and not destruction. Hence our criticism will always be directed to this end. We shall always shrink from personal attacks, nor shall we indulge in personal controversies. We want to extend our hand of cooperation towards the establishment of a healthy political life. In these matters the teachings of Mahatma Gandhi would always guide us. We wish to assure you that we have not taken this step out of ill-will or antipathy, and there is no bitterness in our hearts. Many of our comrades and colleagues are in the Congress; and our relations with them would always be sweet as before. We know that they would also be unhappy on our leaving them. However our common political ideals and our common faith shall in a way continue to keep us united with them.

We have said before that the democratic character or practice is rare among our people. And we shall have to use all our resources and goodwill to bring it about. Among children the democratic ideal can be fostered only through education. But at the political level a party in power should accept that the establishment of an Opposition party is essential for the functioning of democracy.

All the same, whenever stress is laid on political freedom and on the need to organise an Opposition it is denied outright by those occupying the seats of power and all this is done in the name of Indian tradition. Indeed, a new prescription has been evolved to hush up the demand for an Opposition party. It is claimed that India can develop democracy without following the Western practice, so that it can leave aside those good things which are regarded as the essential components of the democratic system in the West. Their love of Indian tradition is not shaken in the least when

our Constituent Assembly accepts wholesale the various European constitutions. But when an essential device—arising out of the experience of hundreds of years—for the protection of the democratic system i.e. the need for an Opposition, is suggested, it is discarded in the name of a mysterious Indian tradition.

It is our advice to these advocates of the Indian tradition that they should follow the healthy rule passed on to them by our ancestors that they ought to retire from public life after a certain age. If our ministers and politicians leave public life around the age of sixty, it would greatly benefit both the government and the people. I would go so far as to say that such rule should be included in the proposed Constitution of India ! Indeed for resolving our present-day problems and for running the Government we need young men and women who are full of enthusiasm and a new outlook. Exhausted and orthodox people will only bungle things. When there is a rule for the civil servants to retire from service after a certain age, there is no reason why Ministers should be exempted from it. We are living in a dynamic age, where things are changing every moment. In these circumstances, older people cannot be expected to act with sufficient vigour and promptness.

If you refuse to accept the need for an opposition party, it only means that you support absolute government. Indian governments are slowly moving towards dictatorship. It is their claim that the present rule is all right and as such it should be unquestionably supported. In the name of national government the people are asked to regard it as the sole repository of good sense and justice, and as such have full faith in it. Our rulers today cannot stand criticism, and they are extremely confident of themselves. In fact they are so vain as to think that they can take care of the present emergency without anyone else's help or co-operation.

*The Panchayat Raj—A Revolutionary Step.**

The Socialists must endeavour to run the village *Panchayat* successfully whether the Government want it or not, and towards that end it is imperative that the party workers launched a programme to educate the villagers in the local and national problems confronting them. The job of the Socialists is to instill a new vigour, a new enthusiasm, and a new vision of life among the villagers.

The introduction of *Gram Panchayat* with universal adult suffrage is a revolutionary measure that may transform the entire course of Indian politics, and the UP Government deserves praise for this bold venture. The right to vote has brought about an unprecedented awakening among the masses, the downtrodden and the suppressed for centuries, and the fact that a large number of so-called untouchables and lower caste people have been returned to the *panchayat* defeating their high caste opponents amply evidenced it.

MASS AWAKENING

This awakening among the socially oppressed and suppressed people were to be found in other countries, would have been nothing less than a revolution, for in other countries the people would have aligned themselves on the basis of their class and not that of caste. But, since India is a caste-ridden country, in the first flush of enfranchisement, the oppressed have justly rallied round their castes. I welcome the victory of the lower castes in the elections and the alignment of the downtrodden on the basis of their castes is a happy and an inevitable feature of the elections. It reflects that the lower castes, who are the expropriated ones consisting of landless agriculture labourers and small peasants, are rising against the vested interests, and economically superior higher castes.

REAL ENEMIES

The growth of conscious "casteism", however, must be arrested now, since

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it has exhausted its utility. It is now necessary to tell the lower castes that their real enemies are the vested interests, and that the upper castes have held them under their yoke only on account of their economic superiority. The oppressed castes must be told that the remedy of all their ills lay in joining hands with the other economically oppressed people, may they be of any caste or creed to fight the vested interests even among the lower castes.

There are fears among the illiterate class of their being enfranchised. But they seemed to be unfounded. Being illiterate does not mean lack of knowledge, for real knowledge is not stuffed in the text books, but is derived from life. Illiterate men could be intelligent enough to grasp the problems and take correct decisions. Besides every true democrat should believe in the verdict of the masses, whether literate or illiterate, and that there could be no real democracy without universal adult suffrage. Some Congressmen have become unnerved about universal suffrage and are thinking to go slow with this new experiment of *panchayat raj*. But these *panchayat* must be run successfully and made effective instruments to revitalise the rural life. At present, there is despair and frustration among the people since they have been disillusioned by the Congress. The job of the Socialists is to instil a new vigour, a new enthusiasm and a new vision of life among the people, for then alone could the country progress.

CONSTRUCTIVE APPROACH

The Socialist members of the *panchayat* should participate in them with a constructive approach. The *panchayat*, unlike the legislatures, are the instruments to accomplish constructive work in the villages and there is, therefore, no need to create an unnecessary political opposition in *panchayat*.

The Socialists may successfully run these *panchayat* for the ultimate object of establishing democratic socialism. But they must work honestly and scrupulously with the belief that the ultimate success would be theirs. They must stick to their principles, for the Socialists have yet to convince the people that they would not go corrupt when they assumed office.

*Monopoly House and the Congress Government**

The Congress government has done practically nothing to stop the growth of oligopoly or crypto-monopoly in India. It has refused even to abolish the managing agency system and the interlocking of directors which are two important means of the concentration of the economic power in the hands of a handful of Indian capitalists, which are not allowed even in capitalist countries like the USA. Even if the Congress government had tried to stop the growth of this concentration, it would have met only with limited success. Just as in the USA anti-trust laws could not stop the growth of oligopoly, so in India such laws will fail. For this purpose socialisation of industries of monopolistic tendencies is absolutely necessary. But the Congress government seems to be opposed to the policy of socialisation of industries. It has no doubt socialised the air transport, but mainly because Indian capitalists were not prepared to bear the loss which the enterprise entailed. The Imperial Bank of India is nationalised but not for extending banking facilities to rural areas. So this nationalisation will have no material effect on the economic power of the capitalists in the industrial sphere.

The Congress government stands for the system of 'mixed economy' composed of State and private enterprises. Such a system is in no way new to India. Before her independence in 1947, India had already a large sector of industrial activities under State aegis. The entire railway system, the postal, telegraphic and communication services, a large number of major electricity plants, the Reserve Bank of India and many other public utility services were owned by the Central or Provincial governments. In addition to these, some of the provinces and states were running industrial concerns.

In April 1945, the Planning and Development Department of the Government of India issued a statement on the industrial policy. In this statement it stated: "Apart from ordnance factories, public utilities and railways, basic industries of national importance may be nationalised,

*Presidential Speech, 2nd Annual Conference of the Praja Socialist Party, Socialist Party, Gaya, 28 December, 1955.

provided adequate private capital is not forthcoming and it is regarded as essential in the national interests to promote such industries.”

In 1948, the Congress government released its industrial policy resolution. In this resolution it stated that the State must play a progressively active role in the development of industries. Industries were classified into three categories: (1) industries reserved for the exclusive monopoly of the Government of India; (2) industries reserved for State initiative; (3) private enterprise. In the first category were included the manufacture of arms and ammunitions, the production and control of atomic energy and the ownership and management of railways. In the second category were included coal, iron and steel, mineral oils, aircraft manufacture, ship building, and manufacture of telephone, telegraph and wireless apparatus excluding radio-receiving sets. All other industrial activities were to belong to the third category of private enterprise. With regard to industries of the second category it was laid down that in these fields the State would be exclusively responsible for the establishment of new undertakings, though they might secure the cooperation of private enterprises. It was further laid down that existing undertakings in these fields would be allowed all facilities for efficient working and responsible expansion for a period of ten years, after which the question of their nationalisation would be examined.

The possibility of nationalisation of the existing undertakings after ten years caused such resentment amongst industrialists that the Government of India postponed the consideration of the question for an indefinite period, and its Deputy Prime Minister remarked that if anybody talked of nationalisation, it was for the purpose of power politics or for propaganda. Even Prime Minister Nehru, in his characteristic manner, belittled the idea of the nationalisation of existing undertakings as an outworn idea. Once the question of the nationalisation of existing undertakings, even in selected basic industries such as coal, iron and steel, is ruled out for an indefinite period, nothing specially socialist remains in the industrial policy; and 1948 model of mixed economy ceases to differ substantially from 1945 model determined by an Indian capitalist, the late Sir Ardeshir Dalal, as the Head of the Planning and Development Department of the Indian Government under British aegis.

Five-Year-Plans cannot claim to introduce the system of State-planned economy in the industrial sphere. The first Five-Year-Plan was hardly a plan, as it consisted mostly of schemes launched by the Central and State governments without any reference to an overall plan. Industrial development was regarded as “mainly the responsibility of the private sector”, and no attempt was made to plan production and distribution of industrial goods. Capitalists continued to dominate the industrial sphere of the national economy and to run industries on the usual capitalistic lines. Yet,

the Indian Planning Commission argued against workers' right to strike on the ground that strikes had no places in an economy, organised for planned production and distribution. The Second Plan provides for the establishment of certain public enterprises in certain industries. But it also does not intend to substitute the system of the State-planned economy for that of the competitive capitalist economy. Nor is any attempt made to arrest the growth of the condition of oligopoly or crypto-monopoly. Though some reference is made to the question of distribution, no attempt is made to secure fair wages for workers.

The Congress Government cannot claim to have any special solicitude for workers' welfare. It has failed to implement most of the directives of the State policy laid down in the Constitution for the purpose. Nothing substantial is done to secure the right to work. More than ten million men are unemployed even according to the Government's own calculations. The number of under-employed is incalculable. The question of unemployment and under-employment of women has not come under consideration. No attempt has been made to secure to women equal pay for equal work. The Constitution directs the State to endeavour to secure to all workers, industrial and agricultural, a living wage and conditions of work ensuring a decent standard of life, and the Tripartite Conference of 1947 agreed to ensure to industrial workers a fair wage.

But the Government got enacted only a minimum wages law, which has been brought into operation haltingly in certain selected industries. The Tripartite Conference of 1947 agreed to labour's share in the profit of industry. But no attempt has so far been made by the Congress Government to implement this agreement, and workers remain entitled only to a bonus ensured to them under the British regime. Without implementing these agreements, the Congress Government insists on the enforcement of industrial truce on workers and has for the purpose enacted the Industrial Disputes Act. The workers' right to strike is unduly curtailed and in almost all strikes the Congress Government has invariably sided with the employers. In many cases, strikes are ruthlessly suppressed and workers are brutally belaboured by the police. INTUC unions, sponsored by the Congress, function in many cases merely as liaison between the Government and employers.

The objective of the Congress is profoundly vague and it seems to have been kept so deliberately. When the new Congress constitution was going to be finalised, socialist democracy was proposed as its objective. But this proposal was dropped in favour of a co-operative commonwealth. The idea of a co-operative commonwealth has not so far been clearly defined. It has been interpreted differently on different occasions and by different leaders. Stripped of vague generalities, the Congress ideal of co-operative

commonwealth, as defined in its Constitution, does not go beyond regulated capitalism. In its last session at Avadi the Congress has passed a resolution in favour of the socialistic pattern of society. But no attempt has so far been made to define its character clearly and its vagueness was confessed by Pandit Nehru in the *Lok Sabha*. How vague the concept is, can be clear by the fact that while Pandit Nehru distinguished it from, and preferred it to Sarvodaya at the Berhampur session of the All-India Congress Committee, the Congress President subsequently maintained that it would be founded on Sarvodaya.

Socialism holds that the central problem of social economy is the complete and comprehensive utilisation of the available human and material resources for the maximum production of wealth and for the maximum realisation of human welfare. Economic advance, if real progress has to be made, must be conceived not only in material terms of natural resources, capital, machines, technical skill or even production of goods, but also in human terms, in terms of human happiness, progress and dignity.

Planned economy and socialisation of industries are obviously indispensable for the construction of such an economic order.

While planned economy alone can ensure the maximum utilisation of human and material resources in production and welfare, under socialist system alone a real planned economy is possible. Planned socialist economy will ensure the rational use of all the productive resources for promoting the maximum human welfare. It will save the community from the evils of exploitation, and from economic domination by financial interests. Rationalisation will cease to be workers' bug-bear as it will increase their productive efficiency without causing danger of unemployment. Production will be considered in the light of real costs in relation to real human needs and wants; an equitable distribution of the national income ensuring means of decent life to the entire working people will be made possible; and whatever profits are made will be ploughed back for further economic development according to plan, thereby increasing the tempo of industrial development. Socialist planned economy will resolve the conflict between productive and consumptive powers, which is the root cause of crisis, and will ensure a stable, evolutionary development with full employment without cyclic swings and economic crisis.

To achieve these objectives, planning must aim at turning the productive resources to effective account and at guaranteeing employment at a high and even rate to all those able to work, as well as at providing a living standard for all citizens commensurate with the proceeds of joint national efforts.

National economic plan must not, therefore, be confined to the planning

of undertakings which the Government proposes to organise under public ownership. It must cover the planning of the entire economic life of the nation. It must include not only the plan of production but also the planned distribution of incomes among the entire body of citizens. It must also deal with the question of nationalisation of private undertakings and the co-ordination of the private sector in planned economic development. It must also provide funds for planned promotion of social welfare and securities as well as of cultural advancement.

Parliament itself must be the final authority for approving the economic plan on behalf of the community. But the plan must not be prepared exclusively by Government experts and officials. The National Planning Commission must also consist of non-official experts nominated by the Central Government and representatives of important public bodies, such as trade unions, cooperatives, *kisan sabhas*. To avoid regimentation along with bureaucratism, sectional bodies should be consulted at all stages, local initiative should be encouraged, and regional planning committees, on the model of the National Planning Commission, should be formed with powers to assist the National Planning Commission in the preparation of National Plan and to frame regional plans within the framework of the National Plan. Regional Plans must also be submitted to corresponding local authorities for their approval. Within the framework of the National Plan regional authorities should be allowed wide direction to plan and execute regional economic development in accordance with the wishes and needs of the people of the region concerned.

Socialisation must take a form that is adjusted to the nature of the industry, so that it may always result in higher output, better distribution and greater security and freedom for the workers.

Cooperatives are an essential factor in socialisation. They are admirable as a method of organising the distribution of household supplies. Consumers' Cooperatives have played an important role as consumers countervailing power against Big Business under the capitalist system and are an essential constituent of the planned socialist economic system. They may be allowed not only to handle the internal trade of consumers' goods but also to produce certain household supplies for their stores.

The small-scale industry must receive devoted attention of the State in a country, rich in manpower and short of capital. Its development is necessary to provide to the country a balanced economy free from unemployment. In a country where a majority of cultivators have long months on their hands, when no agricultural operations are possible, national interests require a cultivator to be in part an agriculturist and in part an independent industrial worker. Such a co-ordination will enrich him both materially and culturally, and will better enable him to lead a life at par with an industrial worker.

India is famous for its handicrafts since ages; and it is our duty to utilise the hereditary skill of Indian artisans and craftsmen for the industrial development of the country. Planned socialist economy must, therefore, provide for the development of small-scale industries. Special attention should be paid to their technological and organisational development and to the correlation of small-scale and large-scale industries. Technology must play its part to modernise and develop cottage industry. Small machines worked by electricity supplied to every village house may be invented and the output per unit of labour may thus be increased. This will also eliminate the drudgery involved in certain small-scale industries. If such convenient small machines are used and, if they are worked to electric power, a time may come when this kind of industry may be able to compete freely with centralised industry even in the narrow economic terms of free market. Till then small-scale industry may be as signed an exclusive non-competitive sphere of activity. Attempt should be made to so co-ordinate small-scale and large-scale industries that standardised parts of machines and other finished goods of certain large-scale industries can be made in the village homes with convenient small machines, worked if necessary, by electricity. The small-scale industry must be organised in producers' cooperatives.

But cooperation, by its very nature, is not capable of organising great industries. Nor is it possible to deny to the community the use of the technique of large scale production, so essential to produce basic materials and capital goods and to organise certain essential services, such as transport and the supply of fuel and power. Large-scale manufacturing is no doubt developed by capitalism. But the two are not so integrally interconnected that the liquidation of the latter must imply the negation of the former. The aim in a socialist society is to attain the highest possible standard of living, materially and culturally. Therefore, science, technology, art, all are pressed into service to achieve that aim. All forms of production—large, small, concentrated, dispersed—are made subservient to the needs of production, employment, health and happiness.

Large-scale industries must be owned by the community as nationalised industries and be on its behalf under the charge of the authorities of the Indian Union, its constituent State and local self-governments, as determined in the national plan. A nationalised industry can best be run by public corporations, autonomous as far as the day-to-day policy and administration are concerned, but subject to the overall control of the aforesaid public authorities in general matters of policy. This arrangement will ensure to the community, through its representatives, necessary control over nationalised industries, freedom from undue political interference. They can be run as business proposition on non-party lines.

Democratic socialism stands for workers' participation in the control of nationalised industries, not only because of its effect in making the workers more conscious of their responsibility of high productivity, on which the standard of living must depend, but also because it is impossible to have a really democratic society, if most of the members have to spend most of their lives at work under essentially undemocratic conditions. No central leadership, however wise it may be, can alone direct the economic and social development in general and in details. Such a tendency is absolutely bound to end in bureaucratic despotism, kill the democratic spirit of socialism, and convert it into totalitarian communism, or administrative socialism.

Workers' right of self-government is qualified by claims of the general interest of the entire community. So, while workers can claim representation on public corporations and their boards of management, they will have to concede to public authorities representing all the citizens of the State or the region concerned the right to direct, control and supervise the management and determine the general policy which each industry or economic enterprise is to follow.

From the principle of self-government in industry it follows that the working men should have the capacity to exercise such an influence over the management as will simultaneously be conditioned by both the collective and the individual interests. In other words, they must have both, a sense of responsibility towards society and necessary insight into the true state of affairs of at least the industry concerned.

This imposes on the Praja Socialist Party and trade unions the duty to develop a workers' education movement which will remove the cultural backwardness of the working class and help the workers in developing social consciousness and the capacity of judgement.

Socialism strongly holds that every one has both — the right and the obligation to work. For maximum production and happiness it is but necessary that each individual is placed in position to contribute his best to the community, and is provided with the requisite means for decent living and the growth of his personality. So, if a person performs work recognised as socially necessary to the best of his capacity, he must be entitled to a remuneration adequate to maintain him in a condition of civic efficiency, that is to say, not only in health but in a position to develop and exercise his faculties, to enter upon marriage and parenthood, and meet whatever costs of a normal family are not undertaken directly by the community. Such a reward is inherent in his quality as a human being, and along with necessary deductions for capital securities in forms of sickness insurance, maternity welfare, old age pensions, frictional unemployment aid etc. must be a first charge upon the productivity of the society. Beyond the civic

minimum, differences in reward must be required by the common good of society. Such a system of reward will provide security and adequacy to all and offer to some access to comforts which are paid for by the greater value they contribute to society.

No man, socialism holds, can claim absolute and inalienable right to property. All human rights are social, functional and evolutionary in character, and are inseparably connected with social obligations. The right of property is not an exception to this rule. Property is a social institution, and like all other social institutions, is governed by social laws, needs and conditions. It must satisfy claims of social good and is liable to abolition when it outlives its utility and hinders social progress. No man has a moral right to property except as a return for functions performed. No community has ever recognised the right of property as absolute or irrevocable. The community has always reserved to itself the right to modify laws with respect to property in the social interest and to acquire it from its owners for public purposes. In all countries laws of property have changed from time to time and old proprietary rights have been modified and liquidated often without any compensation.

Socialism holds that the property of the entire people is the mainstay of the community in the development of the national economy. The right of property cannot be allowed to be exercised to the detriment of the community. Private property in economic resources and enterprises cannot be allowed in forest and mineral resources, basic and large-scale industries, as well as in banks and insurance business, and can be allowed in other means of production to the extent they are consistent with the general interest of the people and will be regulated and expropriated by means of law, whenever necessary, for promoting public good. The State will be the whole judge of the compensation when offered.

*Is the Congress Drifting Away? **

The Congress is drifting away from the masses. It is afraid of the people and shows no respect for public opinion. The Congress cannot tolerate opposition and is developing fascist tendencies. The argument of the Congress leaders that due to numerous unforeseen difficulties and problems they are not able to fulfil their declared objectives is not convincing. Almost every country in the world, except the USA, was hard hit as a result of the war. But the workers and peasants are now there so miserable as they are in India. It is wrong to say that labourers hamper production by going on strikes. The truth is that capitalists do not invest the necessary capital as they want to compel the Government to accept their terms. Capitalists are responsible for the present low production. But the Government are not taking strong measures against them.

England sustained inconceivable loss in men, money and material during the last war. It is more an accident than anything else that she survived the war. There were enormous difficulties and problems before the British Government. Even then much relief has been brought to the common man there. There is cheap food and free medical aid in Britain.

WORLD SITUATION

The Congress declared a classless society as its goal at Jaipur. But this was sheer propaganda to counteract the growing left influences. There was unrest all the world over and old traditions, ideas and institutions are giving way. Capitalism has reached a stage when it cannot last long. On the one side there was an increase in the number of millionaires, on the other, the army of poor and unemployed is increasing at a rapid speed. The entire world is sitting on a volcano. No one knows what would happen tomorrow. The world-shaking events are taking place in China, Burma and other places, heralding the advent of age. Socialism is the order of the day and it alone can rescue the diseased and distressed world. ❀

*Based on the speech published in the National Herald, May 5, 1949 and July 25, 1949.



Chairman's Message



Narendra Deva with the Austrian Prime Minister



At the Grave of Karl Marx



Narendra Deva with the Austrian leader



Narendra Deva Abroad



Narendra Deva talking to JP at GM Hospital, Lucknow



JP and Narendra Deva



Narendra Deva Ganga Sharan Singh at Patna Conference in 1949



The Departed Soul: Homage by Morarji Desai



The Last Journey: Hazaratganj, Lucknow



Narendra Deva—A Profile



A Moment's Respite: A Bliss



Time to Brood

Congressmen feel that they cannot catch popular imagination if they are not in line with this world's development. When Sardar Patel says that they have no resources to nationalise industries, it becomes quite clear that they are incapable of implementing the socialist programme. To put off the fundamental demands of workers is itself a proof that the Congress aim of classless society has no shadow and substance.

CONGRESS TODAY

What is the Congress today? There is a partisanship and grouping within the Congress. It is an organisation divided against itself. A mad race for power, office and money has taken the place of selfless service. Leaguers, *Sanghis* and *Mahasabhaites* are being invited to join the Congress. The organisation is drifting away from the masses. It is afraid of people and shows no respect for public opinion. It cannot tolerate opposition and is developing fascist tendencies. Socialism cannot be ushered in with the help of government servants.

The Congressmen go about saying that speaking against the Congress is disloyalty to the State. It is not so. The Government and the State are not the same thing. We want to reform the Government and, if necessary, to change it, but that does not mean that we want to weaken the State. The Government should not be identified with the State.

Our problems are so difficult and complex that ordinary methods would not succeed in solving them and bringing relief to the people. Without the heartiest co-operation of the people even the 'save food drive' cannot be successful. For this, great enthusiasm has to be created and the prevailing sense of frustration has to be overcome. Those who are at the top should set an example to the people whom they expect to follow them. If they are keen to see that people observe austerity, they should first practise it themselves. For instance, the ministers and district officials should refuse big parties, dinners and banquets when they visit districts and discourage such wasteful extravagances. The Government should immediately send a circular to all the officials, and follow it themselves too, that they must not accept such parties.

They should take people into confidence and acquaint them with the real situation and not beguile them by their misleading propaganda. Instead of trying to do many things which are beyond their resources they should concentrate on a few things which matter most at the moment. Basic problems of food and clothing have to be attacked comprehensively. The Government expenses should be drastically cut down to convince the people that their Government are in earnest about things for the people's good. All waste must be ruthlessly eliminated.

COMMUNISTS AND SOCIALISTS

I am not used to saying hard things, but I cannot refrain from stating that an effort to bracket the Socialist Party and the Communist Party is being made deliberately to mislead the people. It is most unfair to us, and if they are not prepared to distinguish the Socialists from the Communists they should not expect us to co-operate with them even on matters where there is agreement.

PROBLEM OF BENGAL

In Bengal, the people suffer from a terrible sense of frustration and the *Bhadra Lok* class is economically in a very bad way. Population has become unwieldy there. The housing, unemployment and refugee problems have achieved enormous proportions and are getting increasingly acute day by day. These problems should be solved with tact and determination. The approach has got to be economic and psychological. The Government must tackle these problems quickly and understand them in their entirety. Superficial measures will not do.

The Communist menace is not as great as it is being made out to be. But that does not mean that we should overlook the problem. It should not be forgotten that police action alone cannot remove the Communist menace. One has to go deep into the causes and it is only by a proper diagnosis that a cure can be found. Excepting in a very few localities, the Communists have no mass influence, but if the economic situation deteriorates rapidly one cannot say what will happen.

*HOME MINISTER'S STATEMENT **

It is quite untrue. I was perhaps the first man in Lucknow to condemn the terroristic acts in the country. I gave my views to the PTI just a few hours after the Calcutta meeting. The next day Dr. Lohia also condemned them. I would like to know what explanation the president of the provincial Congress Committee and other top-ranking Congress leaders and ministers have for their silence on the matter. This is again a piece of propaganda to damn the leftists in the country.

PUBLIC SAFETY ACT

I do not think there is any good case for giving a fresh lease of life to the

* The UP Home Minister condemned the Socialists for the recent happenings in Calcutta during Nehru's visit.

Public Safety Act. It is dangerous to give such extraordinary powers to the executive when no emergency exists in the province. Our party will come to power only in fulness of time. The party will have to take lessons from the blunders of the Congress. If they do not learn they may not come to power at all, and even if they do come, they are not likely to stay in office for long. The Government that follows the traditions of the present Government cannot stay.

It should be the duty of all citizens in the country to root out corruption and those who condemn it again and again are under greater obligations to do so. The masses will increasingly vote for us in days to come, because they instinctively understand us. They do not understand the niceties of programme. But they know who are their real friends—who espouse their cause and fight against their exploiters and oppressors. The difficulty is only about the intelligentsia and that, too, because they have different interests and the Congress leaders talk to them in the language of socialism. In the countryside the Congress is losing its popularity.

“Do you think that the Socialist Party will come to power in the next elections?” I am asked.

My reply is: “It depends upon many factors. It is too early to predict”.

Because of its vast resources, both in men and money and its rich potentialities and comparative stability, India's influence is bound to grow in the international sphere. But so far as India's moral leadership is concerned it has distinctly lost ground ever since the Asian Conference was held in New Delhi. Her spiritual leadership can only be established if she could make a notable contribution to the solution of world problems and evolve a new pattern of social and economic life in consonance with the progressive ideas of the age.

But it is bad to reflect that nothing is being done in this field, nor do the policies of the Government of India hold out any hope that India will have the courage and wisdom to strike out a new path for the world. There is lack of enthusiasm amongst the people and nothing is being done to combat this spirit of indifference and apathy. People suffer from a sense of frustration and so long as this mood prevails nothing great can be achieved. The Congress has not laid the psychological basis for such an achievement.

*The Weapon of Satyagraha**

The case of Dr. Lohia has raised a fundamental issue of great public importance. Gandhiji made a valuable contribution to political philosophy by laying down that even in democracy the right of individual *satyagraha* should be recognised. Peaceful *satyagraha* has become an integral part of our life. It is one of the fundamental rights of citizens to assemble peacefully to record their protest against an act which they disapprove. Restrictions on his fundamental right can be placed only in extraordinary circumstances and for very good reasons only.

Gandhiji's life-work has changed the whole concept of the law of sedition in India and has compelled society to recognise the right of peaceful *satyagraha* and the right to observe fasts for a just and certain noble cause under very special conditions. To refuse to recognise them is to deny the creed of *ahimsa*.

Dr. Lohia's intimate connection with the democratic struggle in Nepal made it obligatory upon him to do something to express his and Indian people's solidarity with the people of Nepal. The method of protest which he devised was the only one which could be conceived in the circumstances. He rightly asserted his right of offering peaceful *satyagraha* when an obstacle was placed in his way. In these days, when civil liberties are being everywhere withdrawn, it sometime becomes the duty of a citizen to willingly pay the penalty in assertion of a moral principle.

The Public Safety Act has been in force in the city of Delhi more or less for the last two years. At the seat of central authority, one would expect civil liberties functioning in a very large measure. The old traditions of the Punjab police and magistracy still hold in full force. The use of tear gas and *lathi* in dispersing a small and peaceful crowd is indefensible. Dr. Lohia has rendered a great public service to the cause of civil liberties and democracy by raising this public issue.

Section 144 is becoming the normal feature of our lives. In the entire

province of Bihar public meetings and processions are banned and a formal permission has to be obtained from district authorities in every single case. There are no valid grounds for imposing such restrictions on the fundamental rights of citizens. High-souled citizens who ordinarily obey the laws will find it more and more difficult to acquiesce in them and will sometimes feel it their duty to disobey.

The Congress Government has denied the right of peaceful *satyagraha* by adopting undemocratic and repressive policy to a public-spirited and devoted leader like Dr. Lohia to voice his protest against the high-handedness of the Nepal Government in suppressing the freedom movement in their country.

After the attainment of political independence the Congress Government has deliberately turned their back on all democratic and Gandhian principles and ideals and were drifting towards fascism and imperialism of a brand far more worse than the British imperialism in India.

The recognition of the principle and doctrine of non-violence, which was Mahatma Gandhi's cherished philosophy, has bestowed on an individual, in a democratic society, the right of *satyagraha* as the only means of securing justice, rectification of a wrong done, or repeal of a perverse and unjust law. No government or power can legitimately deprive an individual of this right. It is nothing short of callous ruthlessness and high-handedness on the part of a government, which claims to be a popular and national government, to have arrested and convicted a peace-loving and high-minded leader like Dr Lohia, who was pledged to the service of the poor and down-trodden peasants, merely for ventilating a perfectly legitimate grievance against the Nepal Government in a peaceful and constitutional manner.

Dr. Lohia's chivalrous action and his consequent arrest by the Delhi police under orders from the top served the useful purpose of focussing public attention on an important political issue and setting the whole country astir and thinking. This could not have been done in any other way, since there was a complete blackout of news in Nepal. The people had every right to demand Government's intervention in the affairs of a foreign country in the interest of our nationals residing there or in support of a popular movement. In this connection, one might be reminded of the keen and lively interest and intereference by the Indian Government in the Burmese political affairs. Dr. Lohia had similarly championed the cause of political freedom in Nepal and could rightly be called its author and inspirer. There was no other course open to him than a peaceful *satyagraha* near the Nepalese Embassy in Delhi for securing the release of the leader of the Nepali Congress, B.P. Koirala, from imprisonment.

Dr. Lohia was granted permission only to hold a meeting. But he was

refused permission to take out a procession or hold a demonstration. By resorting to *satyagraha* with his 250 followers in defiance of the ban, Dr. Lohia did not mean to attack the Nepalese Embassy. The tear gas which the Delhi police used to disperse the demonstrators, apart from suffocating those for whom it was intended, spread around and penetrated into the houses in the neighbourhood, hurting innocent women and children. In the Indian capital today a typically rough Punjabi atmosphere prevailed, as evidenced in the case of Dr. Lohia and his comrades. To add insult to injury, there was a severe lathi charge for which there was no earthly necessity.

He was very much pained to learn of the inhuman treatment meted out to one of the arrested persons in police custody. He demanded an inquiry into the incident, suggesting deterrent punishment to police officers and men found guilty of committing excesses on a peaceful crowd.

The Congress Government should prove themselves worthy of public confidence and loyalty. He added that the politically conscious and enlightened masses would not allow the principles and tenets of Mahatma Gandhi to be set at naught by the Congress having recourse to force and violence as a matter of policy. Even the British would not have ordered such ruthless police action over a trivial and inconsequential matter.

'The regime of ordinance is in force in all the 16 districts of Bihar. A similar act is in force in Delhi and other provinces where there is no necessity of it. Too much political capital is made out of the non-existent 'Communist bogey'. The Socialist movement in India cannot be suppressed or killed by force and police action. It would assert itself and triumph in the end.

Aruna's Marxism Examined

Mrs. Aruna Asaf Ali has recently published a book. She has tried to prove that the Socialist Party of India has given up Marxism. Her main attack is on "Democratic Socialism". She has also condemned the foreign policy of the party. She is against the party's participation in the election. She also thinks that the organisation of the party is against the principles of Marxism. In her opinion, the party has ceased to be a revolutionary organisation. She considers this party as reformist. She has, therefore, advised that the party should merge in the Congress. She is also not satisfied with the parties she regards as Marxist. For she thinks, that the lower middle class in place of the working class has its influence over these parties. They are, therefore, disintegrating. They have failed to enlist the support of the working class and this, according to her, is their serious weakness. Aruna Asaf Ali has, therefore, advised these parties to overcome such weakness and re-examine their objectives.

She, however, hopes that the Communist Party will ultimately be an instrument of political expression of the conscious working class. But a majority of the working class sees the Communist Party and other leftist parties with suspicion and distrust. Such a state of affairs is bound to continue as long as they do not amend their policies and rectify their earlier mistakes.

Perhaps this is the reason that Aruna Asaf Ali does not like to join any Marxist Party at present. Her group will strive to bring about unity among Marxist parties and will make the working class revolutionary and militant. If this does not happen, how can the working class establish its dominance in a socialist party. With this limited purpose in view, she has decided to set up study groups and joint action committees of trade unions in every factory. In this endeavour, she seeks the co-operation of all Marxist parties.

She has referred to this weakness of Marxist parties. But she has never

tried to mention anything either about the defects in their policies or the reason of her differences with them. She has however asked that she would be able to decide the political technique and methodology only after studying the Indian situation. She accepts this fact that the revolutionary principles as evolved by thinkers abroad are not adequate enough to take this country to its destination. She has neither analysed the Indian situation; nor did she draw up the programme she wants to take up in the present situation. She does not seem to make up her own mind. She has advised to adopt the method of scientific analysis, before one should come to some definite conclusion.

I was anxious to know about her own points of differences from Marxism. But I regret that I could not satisfy my curiosity. She might have at least indicated the shortcomings of Marxism. Marxists have accepted in principle that the working class is the vanguard of the revolution. But they do not consider it worthy of leadership. This seems to be her dilemma. The leadership of the lower class, according to her, in these parties is the root of all evils. It is also the scale for her to measure whether a party is Marxist or not. Let us examine her views. If her views are correct and if the policy and programme of a Marxist party becomes revolutionary through the predominance of leadership of the working class, our job becomes easier. But if her analysis proves wrong, there is no point in discussing her other views.

Aruna Asaf Ali has at least this advantage that she has no “ism” at this moment. But she criticises others. She elaborates her own views on the basic issues. The present controversy will, however, clear the issue. I shall then try to reply to her attacks made on the Socialist Party. I had already made my point clear about “Democratic Socialism” in some of my articles published in the latest issues of *Janvani*. I do not think it necessary to take it up now. But I shall definitely try to meet her points.

The question is: How do we define the petty bourgeoisie? In my own opinion, I place them under the category of “lower-middle class”. Some may describe it as a “petty class”. In modern society, basically, there are two classes—the capitalist and the working class. There is yet another class in between the two, which supports either of these two classes. Being placed there, the lower middle class hovers between these two classes. Left of its natural inclination, the lower-middle class would prefer to join the higher-middle class. But capitalism today has declined in the present era. The lower-middle class faces serious hardships and looks to the working class for its salvation. This is the period of the rise of the working class. When the revolution succeeds, it comes into power. But sometimes it does not happen. As the situation is today the lower-middle class sees its reflection in the philosophy of the working class. Whenever it does not

accept any of these two social philosophies it evolves one for itself keeping in view its own interest, Narodism is an example of this. We call it socialism of the peasant. But such examples are outdated.

The lower-middle class has one more role to play in history. It generally provides revolutionaries to the working class. The higher-middle class enjoys life. They never have any problem. Why will they involve themselves in a revolutionary movement? The working class is mostly illiterate and extremely poor and, therefore, indifferent. Where has it time to worry over?

Following Marxism, there can be no revolutionary movement without revolutionary principles. For Marxists, the role of an intellectual class is very significant. It is the class of intellectuals and thinkers that has formulated and developed the philosophy of socialism. The educated among the lower-middle class have adopted the philosophical, historical and economic principles of socialism. Both Marx and Engels had belonged to this class. In Russia, the educational process of socialism had grown spontaneously with the full growth of labour movement. It was the natural and necessary offshot of the thinking of the revolutionary and educated socialist class. Lenin has quoted the words of Kautsky in the following words:

Socialism can grow only on the basis of serious and scientific knowledge. The main sources of such sciences cannot be the proletariat but the educated section among the middle class. Socialism was conceived by them.

Lenin has also said that history bears the testimony that “the working class can create the sense of trade unionism on the basis of their own efforts.” The lower-middle class provides them a social philosophy, which becomes the basis of social reconstruction. The working class may fight collectively against the factory-owners and the Government. To build a new society is difficult for them. Perhaps the students of history and philosophy will realise it. They also make them realise their historically determined role. It is true that they can accomplish the task only through the working class. Indeed, the social base is rooted in this class. Yet, they are helpless without the revolutionary leadership. At the beginning, the party in Russia belonged to only selective workers. The number of the working class was almost negligible in the party. Lenin said somewhere, that among Marxists there had emerged a class of opportunists as a result of collective labour movement. Marx had written in one of his letters that there had always been confusion over the role of the working class. They sometime become professional theoreticians and writers after they give up their work. One writer had written in the light of his experience that the labour leaders of the labour movement became greater supporters of the reformist tendency in Germany than intellectuals. There is some truth in

his argument. If there is a danger from the leaders of the lower-middle class of betrayal of the revolution, there is no less danger that the working class without the revolutionary leadership may not be satisfied with only its own class interest.

Aruna Asaf Ali pleads for the control of the working class in a political party and wants to establish them in main and important places in the party. She hopes that whatever might be the decision in the party should be taken by them. But she at the same time wants that the socialist principles should be re-oriented in the light of the Indian situation. I am afraid that as long as the working class is not given higher education this will not achieve much. Their immature knowledge may add to their confusion about which Marx has hinted already. What Arunaji perhaps wants is that some alternative philosophy should be evolved, which would be the basis for the formation of a new workers' party. If this is so, what is its uniqueness? After all, the direction of the movement will remain under the leadership of the lower-middle class.

Mrs. Asaf Ali is opposed to a mass party. She has in mind to form a party of a few selected individuals. In such a situation, the representation of the working class will be still more difficult. Arunaji talks much about the India situation. But she forgets that if there is any dominance of the lower-middle class, it is on account of the Indian situation. In India 85 per cent of the people are illiterate. Similar was the situation in Soviet Russia. The situation was, however, different in Western Europe. Arunaji wants to adopt artificial means to achieve her objectives. There is, of course, no doubt that this is the responsibility of Marxists to educate and awaken the working class. Much has to be done in this direction. All may agree with it. But it is not so with Arunaji. She has her own reasons as stated earlier. If this is her views, I have to say that she herself has become confused. It is indisputable that the leadership of the revolution of the working class can come only from the educated lower-middle class alone.

The working class in this country is both backward and weak. It needs most the leadership of the educated lower-middle class; it is estranged with capitalism and it has been trying to solve its problems in co-operation with the working class. Socialism attracts the working masses. It is easier for them to adopt the principles of socialism. The leadership of the revolutionary intelligentsia is more effective than any other class. Persons of different groups may join it. Yet, this class will always assume the role of leadership of the working class. It awakens the revolutionary consciousness among the working class and prepares them for a revolution. It is true that a few individuals among them may strive hard for the leadership. I think that the people, whether they belong to higher-middle class or the lower middle class or the working class, should give up the interest of their own class and

work in collaboration with the core class, that is "the revolutionary intelligentsia". The revolutionaries have their no caste of their own. This class assumes the role of leadership of the working class. The people are ultimately the source of strength. To idolise the working class does not serve the purpose. So also to curse the lower middle class does not seem to be judicious. The revolutionaries among the lower middle class are more inclined to principles than to work. They make this mistake. They bother more about the complexities of philosophical thinking and develop crase for theoretical work. As a result, they do not give attention to their work. They become dogmatic and they erect their own barriers on the way to their revolutionary work. Let them equally give importance to their work. Socialism is a unity between theory and practice. The working class may not understand the revolutionary philosophy and, therefore, their work may not be so revolutionary. Likewise revolutionaries among the lower-middle class may be professional. They do not earn their livelihood while the workers do it at factories. There is a big gap between them. The labour is efficient in their work and more organised. He is more involved in economic struggles than in political ones. The labour give less attention to revolutionary appeals. They also form their impression that their economic conditions may improve within the framework of the capitalist system. An unskilled and backward labour is still more revolutionary than anybody else. For, he has nothing to lose. Keeping the above facts in view, it does not seem to be sound to undermine the importance of the role of the revolutionaries belonging to the lower-middle class as Arunaji has done. To raise doubts about revolutionary intelligentsia is to ignore the facts about a revolution. We have come to know that her study groups will take up the teaching programme. She will recruit teachers from the workers. Her main job will be to point out the mistakes. To appoint the workers as teachers is a commendable job indeed. But such artificial attempts may not bring the workers over a political party. She wants to make a worker an ideal and worship him. She will make mistake if she does so. She seems to be repenting for her not being in the working class. She remorsees for her being born in the lower-middle class. If she wants to remove her stigma can she do it only through trade union activities alone? A revolutionary socialist does not belong to any of these groups. They had kept society divided. He is above all classes. He wants to take the whole humanity to a new height. An ordinary working class is only the means of material expression. But a revolutionary socialist provides to him a spiritual basis. Only those who envision the coming social order have got this insight. Only scientific study can achieve this result. Such philosophy is the outcome of accumulated knowledge, meditation and consistent endeavours. Unfortunately she does not want to become the inheritor of this treasure but prefers to remain a worker.

To me the Communist Party suffers from several serious defects. But I am constrained to say that they do not want to use their intelligence. But they prefer to be dictated by the *Comminform*. They want to be controlled from outside. There is a tendency to militate others. They do not try to search out the truth. Nor have they value for the truth. Even if there is the control of the working class over the Communist Party, there is no possibility of its change in its policy. For, the string of control would be in the hands of outsiders. To me the programme drawn up by Arunaji's group seems to be futile. Why does she not join the Communist Party? If she is not in a position to answer this question? It is logical that she is an individualist and wants to have her own political party. The book that contains the programme of her group is a showpiece. The fact is that she has her position only in the Communist Party.

All parties are not perfect. If she finds some weakness, she may rectify it by remaining within it. She is prepared to join a political party only if it fulfills all her conditions. Such argument has no logic behind it. It is also unnecessary to ask her whether she is immune from the direction of the *comminform*. If she thinks so, what is the relevance of forming a new party? If it is not so, why she is against the "third force". Who were the people who did not remain neutral in the war? Who had sided with Soviet Russia during the war? Why will there be any objection to take the direction from the *comminform* if one is inspired by the sense of internationalism? It is also not intelligible that why Mrs. Asaf Ali keeps her aloof from making use of the communist jargons. Why does she call her own party as "the Socialist Party?"

We should now examine her views about the election. For she feels that even though there is adult franchise, it may not affect the capitalist authority nor will it create any problem to it. To support her own contention she cites an example of Bismarch, who according to her, maintained his authority by conceding the right of adult franchise. Again she said that the institution of parliament is used only in those countries where capitalism has established its stronghold. It is her clear views that the elected Parliament according to present constitution cannot make any significant change in the country. It has its utility to the extent that the working class may realise the truth through it. General election is susceptible to exploitation and through it the leaders of the higher and middle classes achieved their ambitions. But the circumstances in which the people are placed, such method is expensive to know the truth. The working class should, therefore, explore another possibility which is cheaper.

It would have been better if we have taken the situation, both inside and outside the country, into consideration in order to decide if there is any

advantage or not by participating in the election. The experience of other countries may enable us to take some decision in this matter. But to Arunaji this may not be perhaps adequate. We can convince her only if we quote from Marx, Engels and other Marxists. But this is the sign of their immaturity. This may be true as far as the peasants and the working class are concerned.

I think that through an election we can assess every three year the strength of our rivals and we can estimate our own position. To me this one advantage is enough. But there are other advantages of the election also. It provides an excellent opportunity to bring into contact that section of the people, who are still isolated, with the working class. At such a moment we compel the political parties to reply to the criticism publicly and give logical and coherent arguments in support of their policy and programme. Our elected representatives can speak freely and with authority, to our opponents and the people. Such general elections lend altogether a new dimension to the struggle of the working class. Experience has shown that the working class is in a position to oppose the Government institutions which successfully manage the capitalist authority.

The capitalist class has become scared more of legal activities of the working class than extra-legal ones, particularly of their victory at the poll. This may bring fundamental changes in the conditions of the struggle. The old methods of revolt which used to be effective were in vogue till 1948, have now become out-dated.

Everywhere the general election is being used for social change. The socialists in France are now experiencing that without enlisting the support of a major section of the people, particularly the peasants, they may not succeed in bringing permanent success. The party has accepted the programme of parliamentary work and propaganda.

How much Engels was in favour of the adult franchise is evident from his statement. He was so much convinced of it that he felt the small peasants and the lower middle class would be involved by these methods and this will become so powerful that even others will have to bow their heads before them. To continue this work is the main task of the social democrats, he held. In case, if there is a confrontation on a bigger scale with the Army, it is possible to check the growing strength of the struggling socialists. In recent years the army of the State is fast growing. Engels therefore was compelled to think of the new basis of struggle. He had in mind that new weapons, new war strategy and new discoveries were being discovered. It is difficult to meet the challenge of State violence. It is not enough to cite an example of the Russian Revolution. Such facility is not always available. History does not repeat itself. Engels had always advised to take maximum advantage of the elections. He was always against the enforcement of an army against the people.

But Arunaji does not even advise one to revolt. To set up study groups is no preparation of a revolution. The programme as spelt out by Arunaji will not make the working class fighters. But they will continue to remain cowards. Arunaji is also against the policy of sabotage for the Communists to follow. Let one see what opinion she holds about the new programme of the Communist Party. It has now included the programme of contesting the election. The Communists have become the co-sharers of the United Front and they are even prepared to form joint fronts with the *Rashtriya Swayam Sevak Sangh*. (Dr. Z.A. Ahmad has recently said so in a speech in Prayag). The Communist Party is very peculiar. They will either float in the air or they will take rest only after going deep into the earth. They do not know how to keep their feet on the earth. Let me see how Arunaji reacts to them.

Arunaji has no revolutionary programme before her. We had great expectation from the Joan of Arc of the 1942 revolution. I had expected that after two years of thinking and study I shall get some concrete programme from her instead of negative criticism of others. But her action has thrown cold water on us. If one neither revolts nor contests the election, what one should do then? The only course left is to pray to God. But this is also not permissible, according to her.

An armed revolution is not always possible. When there is a world-wide war, such possibility may be there. Today there is an atmosphere of disappointment and indifference all over the country. The need of the times is that we should go on working with perseverance and patience to reawaken the masses through either the class struggle or the elections by establishing sound and strong class organisations. No success is possible without involvement of small peasants, landless labour, and lower-middle class. To create faith in them is only possible through struggles by taking up their day-to-day issues and by enacting legislations in legislatures or by representing them. This is possible only by contesting the elections. According to Arunaji, Parliament is only a show-piece to betray the people and it is the best method to exploit them. If it is so, how can the working class make use of Parliament?

I still hold the view that as there is a possibility of socialist revolution, so the working class can take advantage of institutions such as Parliament. If the basis of capitalism were strong today, it would not have given the right of franchise in such a situation. Today the middle class is conscious and they may not adopt the same liberal policy as they had done to end feudalism in Europe before. In our country, the capitalists had taken the leadership to fight against the British imperialism. But the national struggle could have been accomplished under the leadership of the lower middle class in cooperation with the peasantry and the working class. It

had the sympathy of the middle class in order to serve its own interest. But it had not taken any position there. An ordinary Congress worker had believed in democracy and wanted to finish the system of landlordism. On this basis they successfully fought the elections and got the support of the people. To abolish *Zamindari* and to accept the principles of democracy became necessary. But they had no other programme for the future. One may take pride in the fact that the Congress is the only organisation which believes in any 'ism'. But in the present situation the Government which has neither social philosophy nor economic programme is bound to come under the influence of the vested interests and this is actually happening now. But still the progressive parties are eager to enrol people for the elections. They have no courage to pave the way for establishing socialism nor have they a socialistic outlook enough to perform this work. She wants to show that she is not only free from capitalism but also against it. This may be the reason of her dilemma. Nevertheless, an ordinary worker who is under the spell of the present situation is against capitalism. Though the leadership is the supporter of capitalism, it is in favour of capitalist democracy of the earlier period. On this basis it makes an attempt to become progressive. No nation may oppose democracy after the defeat of fascism in the war. The war has at least done this much for all of us. The working class may make better use of democracy in India. Whether democracy can be established by the ballot or not is still in the womb of the future. Engels has accepted its possibility. But he also could not make it clear. This is, however, clear that its boycott is fraught with danger. It will be better and in the interest of the revolution if the blame is put on the rulers. The situation is fast changing and in the course of years there is every possibility that the party may secure majority if it puts in hard labour. If the balance is tilted, it will take place immediately. The reason is that capitalism is not so strong today and the masses are totally against it. When such a situation arises, the ruling class makes an attempt to violate its own legislations. This will mark the beginning of a new struggle. The people cannot tolerate this injustice and there will emerge a new people's movement as a result of the suffocating atmosphere.

*A Plea for Andhra State**

Whenever the Congress Government is approached to implement its own pledges and to honour its past commitments, we are told on all such occasions that either those old ideas have become stale, have gone out of date and have become unworkable or the idea cannot be implemented at the present time in view of the worsening world situation. I may tell you that these ideas became a part and parcel of our political philosophy. We did not treat them as mere slogans. On the other hand we popularised them, we propagated those ideas and we also remodelled the Congress organization on that pattern and now when the time comes for the Congress Government to implement those ideas, we are told that days have changed, that the new situation demands that those ideas should not be implemented. So far as the present resolution goes, it is quite simple, for it is not of a general nature. If it had been a general proposition, I could have realised the difficulty of the Government in accepting it in *toto*. I do feel that language which is the visible symbol of the separate individuality of a people must be respected as far as possible. Certainly I would agree that language is not the only factor to be considered. The case of each province must be judged on its own merits and all other factors also should be taken into consideration. But so far as the province of Andhra goes, its case, in my opinion, is irrefutable and unanswerable and it has been accepted on all hands including our Prime Minister, who, though he has recently told us that he never felt very enthusiastic about these linguistic provinces, has told us that he would really be pleased if an Andhra province were established. But he added that it was contingent on the fulfilment of one condition namely, that the parties to the dispute must come together and produce an agreed solution. In my opinion if an agreed solution is not forthcoming, it is due to the fact that the real contestants on both sides are within the Congress and they happen to occupy prominent positions and the Prime Minister is finding it practically impossible to bring them together for an amicable settlement.

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I am sorry to say that these provincial leaders who have been within the Congress for so many years and who have been parties to this resolution are, in my humble judgement, accentuating these provincial differences and creating bad blood between one province and another. They are finding it difficult and impossible to rise above narrow provincialism, and they are not trained in the habit of looking at these questions from a broad national point of view. One of them, a stalwart from Maharashtra, who occupied a very prominent position in the Congress organisation, told me many years ago, and he told me with visible emotion that in case the city of Bombay was incorporated in the Gujarat province, he would resist it to the last. I am sorry to say that when prominent leaders in the Congress are of that mentality and are not prepared to give up their petty narrow provincial interests, no solution will be forthcoming and we should go out of the Congress for seeking a solution. My friend has suggested that the matters in dispute should be referred to a tribunal and I would go a step further. If the parties to the dispute do not agree to the appointment of an impartial Tribunal, as a last resort, we should go to the people and ascertain their wishes by taking a plebiscite. The Minister for Home Affairs and States has brought out a new argument and in my humble judgment, a strange argument, to put forward. He says that in view of the worsening world situation nothing should be done or said which would divide the people and he has advised us not to raise new controversies and to avoid all clashes and conflict of opinions.

But I may be pardoned for saying that we are living in an epoch of stress and strain of national conflicts and even within the framework of each nation there are class conflicts and inter-provincial conflicts. The world has lost its balance. It is seeking to achieve a new equilibrium and a new equilibrium, in my judgement, would not be achieved by maintaining the *status quo* but by going in for rapid and radical social changes. Some of the old pet political theories will have to be abandoned. Our concept of national sovereignty will have to be done to remove those things which lead to conflicts between the people of one province and another. It has been said in the Lower House by some friend that if we want to achieve national unity, it is necessary that we should not do anything which may increase and promote fissiparous tendencies in the country, and he happens to hold the opinion that if the provinces are reconstituted on a linguistic basis, they will necessarily weaken national unity. I do not accept such an argument.

In my humble opinion those people who are obsessed with an idea will never begin to think in national terms, so long as their elementary aspirations are not fulfilled. We ourselves are responsible for raising these hopes. We encouraged them to entertain the hope that when the proper time would come the provinces would be reconstituted and when the time

has come for the Congress Government to redeem its own pledges, we are put off on one pretext or another. I would say that if we are to look at every problem of ours from a narrow legalistic point of view and if law and order are the sole considerations which should be brought to bear upon the consideration of every problem, there would neither be peace nor national unity nor progress in the country. But I find that in certain other matters the Congress Government does not care if class conflict is fomented in the country. For instance in the matter of the abolition of *zamindaries*, the Government did not give thought for a moment that as a result of this piece of legislation there would be class conflict in the countryside and it has already been put on the Statute Book. And this morning I learn from the papers that a deputation of the All India Womens' Conference waited on the Law Minister and he gave them the assurance that it was not the intention of the Government to shelve the Hindu Code Bill. If that is true, I may say that there is no other piece of legislation in this country which has provoked so much religious passion and prejudice. Still Government is prepared to fulfil its promise and commitments in this respect. I see no reason why this long-standing commitment of ours, which stands to reason, which, if implemented, would satisfy the aspirations and emotions of certain people, should not be fulfilled. So long as their aspirations are not satisfied they will not settle down to business. They will always be thinking about it. They will always be agitating about it. Therefore, I think from all points of view and in the interest of domestic peace also, it is absolutely necessary that the question of the constitution of a separate Province of Andhra should be proceeded with.

This proposition is quite a simple one and the progress of the nation cannot be held back by those who are accustomed to think on static lines. India is not England and England is no model for us. In any case, our conditions are quite different, and I think the only right solution for this particular problem is that the right of the Andhraites to have a province of their own must be recognised and our Tamil friends would be acting wisely if they do recognise this humble claim of the Andhraites. The main bone of contention is as regards the city of Madras. There are certain other minor disputes, but they can be settled by mutual adjustments. So far as the city of Madras is concerned, when we could agree on the partition of India in the interest of communal peace, I see no reason why, if no other solution is forthcoming for this problem, the city of Madras should not be partitioned.

THE QUESTION OF KASHMIR AND R.S.S.

I am not competent to pronounce any authoritative opinion on this matter, but I will say with a full sense of responsibility that the Praja

Parishad agitation is a communal agitation; that the Praja Parishad is the old R.S.S. It opposed the introduction of I and reform; it supported the *Maharaja* in the days of old; and when the R.S.S. was banned, it overnight assumed a new name and is masquerading under the name of Praja Parishad. I say that this agitation is ill-timed, ill-conceived and is calculated to render the greatest injury to the larger interests of the country. I do not mean that a strong and repressive policy is needed to put an end to this mischievous movement. But I would like to place one aspect of the matter before you which is of some importance in my eyes. It is this that today it has assumed a mass character; it has a broad base now. It has drawn into its orbit a large number of people from different sections of the population. And when I find this phenomenon, I feel perturbed. I know it is due to the new non-communal slogans which have proved so attractive to the masses. But we have to find out the actual reasons which have led these masses to be drawn into the net of these communalists. I am anxious and I want that the communalist leaders should be isolated from the masses. But that would not be possible only by following a repressive policy. That would be possible only if we take an objective view of the situation and try to understand with sympathy the reasons—however wrong they may be—which led a large number of people to join the communal forces in the country.

There must be something which aroused their enthusiasm. What is that? And when I thought over this matter, I came to the conclusion—I may be wrong in my conclusions, I do not know—that the uncertainties of the situation due to protracted negotiations, due to prolonged controversies on the Kashmir issue between Pakistan and India and the United Nations Representative are partly responsible for the present situation and tension in Jammu. The other factor is the clash of two regional nationalisms of Kashmir and Jammu. These two factors, in my opinion, have led the masses into the trap laid by the communalists. Therefore, in my opinion, we cannot ignore the movement. We cannot dismiss it on the simple plea that this movement is led by the communalists and I do hope that the Prime Minister of India and the Prime Minister of the State of Jammu and Kashmir will consider this matter calmly, coolly and dispassionately and try to remove the legitimate grievances of the masses.

I don't stand for vested interests; I don't stand for landlords and I know that a Commission of Inquiry has already been set up by the Government of Sheikh Abdullah to go into the economic grievances of these people. That is a minor question. The major question is that there must be something which has deeply stirred the hearts of the masses. It may be wrong and misplaced—regional nationalism is perhaps wrong. In India, we have suffered too much for it. But it is necessary that something must be

done to enlarge and broaden the outlook of the residents of Ladakh, Kashmir and Jammu. All suffer from this sense of regional nationalism. If they are to live and pull together. It is absolutely necessary that either you give recognition to this feeling and sentiment and concede local autonomy in some form or other or if that is not a feasible proposition, if that is not considered to be desirable, then the next best thing would be for the Government of Jammu and Kashmir and for the Government of India to take steps to see that these people do not have parochial and narrow outlook and that their outlook is broadened. I cannot indicate the steps at the moment. Our Prime Minister is the architect of our policy towards Kashmir and Jammu and I think these facts must be placed before him. I earnestly and honestly feel about the matter. I have fought stoutly against communalism and I shall join hands with any organisation for fighting these communal forces. India can make progress only on one condition that the outlook of the various sections of the Indian community is nationalistic.

What have us independence? What is shaping our destiny? Nationalism and democracy, these are the two vital forces which have changed the complexion of Asia and we do need them in a very large measure. Unfortunately, India suffers from casteism, though we did notice after general elections that communalism met with a bad defeat. But it is not yet dead. Events take place, situations arise which give communalists a new lease of life. Therefore, we have to be cautious all the time. We cannot do a single act which may give encouragement to these forces in the country and I think that it is not a mere accident that the communal forces outside Kashmir are taking advantage of the situation and have joined hands with the communalists of Jammu and Kashmir. When all is said and done, I feel that repression is no remedy for a disease of this kind. It is deep-seeded. Otherwise the masses could never have joined the movement and therefore it behoves us to be careful and to see what is the reason why these people's hearts were stirred and why they joined the movement.

*Land Reforms and the Plan**

The President has made a broad survey of the progress that we have achieved in recent years, and it ends with an optimistic note about the future. I agree that considerable progress has been made in jute and cotton production. It is also true that multi-purpose river valley projects have made some progress. But I see no reason why we should be optimistic about the future, why we should feel self-complacent. We are not yet out of the wood. We are still under the shadow of an overwhelming crisis. The food situation still continues to give us cause for anxiety, and even today there are many districts in Maharashtra, Mysore, Gujarat and Uttar Pradesh which are suffering from famine conditions. If we want a permanent and satisfactory solution of the food problem, which is a national problem, which, in my opinion, is the major and central problem on the happy solution of which the future of the country depends, we shall need sustained efforts for many many years before we can reach the ultimate goal. Therefore, it is not proper on our part to feel very happy over what little we have been able to achieve.

There may be some short-term improvements and they may be lost to us. Therefore, this is not the time for rejoicing or mutual thanksgiving. As I have suggested, the food problem is the major and central problem, and as it is bound up irretrievably with the land problem, I shall have to examine the land policy of the Government as formulated and adumbrated in the Report of the Five Year Plan, and if I find that there is nothing in it which can create popular enthusiasm, encourage local initiative and enthuse the people with a new faith and a new hope, I shall say that in spite of the labour that has been put in during the last two years, it will be a still-born child. Its success will depend mainly on the measure in which we are able to evoke popular enthusiasm. And that will be possible only if we can give new hope of a better future to the landless labourer, to the poor peasant whose holding is admittedly small and uneconomic. It is admitted in the

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report that pressure on land is growing and that fragmentation of holdings is proceeding apace but nothing is being done to check its progress. So far as the landless labourer is concerned, he has been left to mercies of the well disposed and charitable men of the countryside. In these circumstances, I do not think that a proper atmosphere can be created in which we shall be able to get the willing and hearty co-operation of the peasant.

So far as the small and uneconomic holdings are concerned, the recommendation of the Planning Commission is that they should pool together their resources—their lands, their livestock and their agricultural implements—and take to co-operative farming.

Co-operative farming is, therefore, the central theme of this part of the report and its success is more or less made dependent on the administrative machinery of the bureaucracy that will be set up for carrying on its activities in the countryside. The cooperative movement, in order to succeed, must have the ready allegiance and loyalty of the masses because it is well known, all over the world, that the poor peasant is individualistic, that he does not ordinarily take to co-operative farming with enthusiasm. It is the landless labourer that takes readily to co-operative farming; he has no alternative also. But so far as the landless labourer is concerned it is said in the report that the benefit of the redistribution of land will mainly go to the poor peasant and not to the landless labourer. It is, however, said that efforts should be made to secure gifts of land for landless labourers.

As you know, the landless labourer is the disinherited, the most backward and the most oppressed section of the village population. But we find that no effort has been made and no steps have been indicated in the report which may give us satisfaction that there will be a fair deal so far as the landless labourer is concerned. It is true that so far as the reclamation of land is concerned, he will get quite a little share but the major part of it will go to the poor peasant. The landless labourer will have no good reason to feel enthused over this dismal picture, and his willing co-operation will not be forthcoming.

So far as the question of small and uneconomic holdings is concerned, we all know that the draft outline of the Plan did not at all deal with the question. It has a soft heart, a kind of tenderness, for the most efficient producer and for the big farmer. The planners approached the problem from the social point of view. If social conditions are not altered, if equality of status is not accorded and if lands are not divided, it is not possible to enlist the support and sympathy of poor peasants. But, we find a welcome change in the final Plan as it has emerged after discussion and they have now admitted that it would be necessary to fix an absolute limit as regards the amount of land of individual holdings. This is a welcome change and I am glad that wisdom has, after all, dawned upon the planners to extend

this little concession to the poor peasant.

But two years have been already spent in finalising the Plan; three more years remain to implement it; and they say in the learned report that two or three years might be necessary to set up the machinery for land management and for the enforcement of the laws relating to the ceiling of individual holdings; that is to say, that for the next two or three years, we shall not be able to redistribute the land according to the Plan. The ceiling will differ from province to province, and it appears from the report itself that the old tenderness for the big farmer still persists. They are more eager to see that there is efficient management of land but they do not care whether social justice is rendered to the large body of peasants or not. For the rich peasants co-operative methods are not necessary; they will manage their individual holdings and they will not enter into co-operatives. It is only owners of small uneconomic holdings that will have to enter into cooperatives. As it will take another two or three years to redistribute the surplus land, there is no hope for them to enlarge their holdings and so as to make it economic and profitable to them. There is no reason why the planners should expect them to lend a helping hand to the successful development of agriculture. So far as the landless labourers are concerned, I have just placed before you their position as defined in the report itself. They will have to depend mainly upon the gifts which may be made to them as a result of the *Bhoodan Yagna* movement, initiated and conducted by Acharya Vinoba Bhave.

I do not disparage the movement; rather I consider it of some value because it would create a sense of urgency with respect to this matter. It seems, however, that no sense of urgency has been created so far as the Government is concerned. I did expect that as a result of the *Bhoodan Yagna* movement pressure would be brought to bear on the Government to see that justice was done to millions of people who could not earn their livelihood. They must not be left to depend on the charities of well-disposed persons, the *zamindars*, who have no soft heart for them. It has been amply demonstrated as a result of the movement that the poor alone have genuine sympathy for the poor, and not the rich. It shows the solidarity which can easily be established among the poor people, of whatever gradation they may be. I do not know if in these circumstances a suitable atmosphere can be created in the countryside under which the cooperative movement can flourish. I am convinced that the present sense of frustration can be overcome, that the peasantry which is apathetic and indifferent today to social and economic problems can be brought into action provided suitable steps are taken to enthuse it with a new hope. This is possible only if we take immediate steps to redefine the social relations in the countryside, put an end to all exploitation and give them a new status and a new hope.

*Manipur Satyagraha **

I congratulate the people of Manipur on their heroic struggle which they have been waging for the restoration of their constitutional rights, and condemn the police atrocities against peaceful *satyagrahis* who have remained non-violent in spite of grave provocation. The arrest of Shri Rishang Keishing, MP, is unwarranted. He was not engaged in any unlawful activity and his great personal influence with the people of Manipur, specially the Nagas and other hill tribes, has been consistently exercised in the interest of a peaceful movement. His arrest has given rise to a serious situation which is fraught with grave danger. The only leader who could exercise a wholesome restraint on them has been removed from the scene and the task of maintaining an atmosphere of non-violence would, therefore, become all the more difficult. The responsibility of creating such a situation must be placed on the authorities who seem anxious to do everything possible to provoke the people to commit acts of violence.

Peaceful *satyagrahis* have been subjected to *lathi*-charge; women have been insulted and ill-treated; PSP offices have been raided and police have opened fire without any justification. But in spite of these grave provocations people on the whole have remained peaceful and non-violent. I congratulate the people on the peaceful character of the movement and call upon them to bear their sufferings with fortitude. Their cause is just and will ultimately triumph. They should, however, remember that in this hour of trial one wrong act may spoil chances of success.

I am sorry that Home Minister of the Government of India is ignorant of the real situation in Manipur and has accordingly tried to belittle the movement. As a matter of fact the people of Manipur are solidly behind it. They demand the restoration of legislature which they had done even under the autocratic princely rule and which was abrogated in 1949.

Manipur has a distinctive culture of its own and can, therefore,

*Parliamentary Debates(council of States). Vol. III, No. 7-11 11-25 February, 1953.

legitimately claim a separate state for itself. Even smaller States, like Coorg, Ajmer and Delhi, have legislatures. A Chief Commissioner's province without a legislature is an anomaly in free and democratic India. The establishment of a nominated Advisory Council is a retrograde step.

There is one more aspect of the question which should transcend all other considerations. It is reported that a section of the Nagas of Assam are opposed to joining the Indian Union. The task of persuading them to join the Union is rather difficult and delicate. Our approach should be friendly and we should avoid use of coercive methods. They have to be convinced that they stand to gain in sharing the larger life of India. The PSP stands for winning them by persuasive methods and disinterested service. It is just the task in which all democratic forces can join hands. If the Government fail to satisfy the people of Manipur and continue the present policy of repression it may have an adverse effect on the Naga tribes. Such undesirable consequences should be avoided at any cost.

It is true that the States Re-organisation Commission has not completed its labours. But since the demand is insistent and has been encouraged by promises held out to the people from time to time, it seems that something will have to be done immediately. I make an earnest appeal to the Government of India to review the whole matter in the light of what I have said above. In the larger interest of the country, a policy of coercion should give place to a policy of reconciliation. It should not be beyond human ingenuity to devise a formula which would give satisfaction to the people of Manipur.

PARTY IN CRISIS

ALL THAT GLITTERS IS NOT
GOLD

*A Sad Day for Democracy**

I am sorry my friend, Mr. C. B. Gupta, did not read my statement carefully. Otherwise he would not have thought it necessary to come out with a rejoinder. The statement was prompted by the sole desire to restore the shaken faith of the people in democracy. I have nowhere cast aspersions on the local administration, nor have I claimed victory for the PSP candidate. I have only referred to the popular belief and have pointed out that Congressmen who are responsible for creating the situation can alone disabuse the public mind.

HE IS MISLED

I am, indeed, very sorry that Mr. Gupta has allowed himself to be misled by his partymen without making any careful inquiry himself. He was not present in Lucknow on the day of the counting and can have, therefore, no personal knowledge in the matter. He is not correct when he says that "after the counting of the Congress candidate's votes was over, hardly any doubt as to her victory had remained". The one solid and incontrovertible fact in the whole situation is that Congressmen themselves were responsible for spreading the news of the Congress candidate's defeat after the counting was over. Mr. Gupta must have come to know by now that this news was conveyed by Congressmen to Delhi also.

Mr. Gupta has, in his statement, made an appeal to all sides "to build up high traditions so that the new order that we wish to usher in through a democratic process is not destroyed in the very beginning". I heartily endorse this appeal, because a democratic opposition has a much greater stake in the preservation and strengthening of democracy than the ruling party. I have unbounded faith in democracy; it is not a frail substance which will melt away at the first touch of an adverse experience. If it has been such a poor thing I would have ceased to be a democrat after my sad experience of the 1948 by-election.

* Janata, March 20, 1955

CONGRESS RESPONSIBLE

I would remind Mr. Gupta of a few inconvenient facts and then put the question to him whether the Congress Party of his state has not been a sinner in setting false standards of public conduct and whether it is not true that it is doing its little bit to destroy people's faith in democracy. I shall not refer to what the Congress workers have been saying or doing. I shall only refer to the standards set by the tallest amongst them.

Was it not said against me in the 1948 by-election that I was an atheist and that on this ground electors should not vote for me? Was it not highly improper to do so, especially when it was claimed that ours was a secular said this has the misfortune to adorn in his old age the *darbar* of a non-believer, of one who is neither pious in the religious sense of the word nor God-fearing. Was it not said that both, Sanskrit language and Indian nor God-fearing. Was it not said that Both Sanskrit language and Indian culture stood in grave peril if I was returned by the electorate? Was it not said, again, that I had betrayed the Congress by leaving it at a critical juncture in its life's history? Was this the speech of a democrat or of a demagogue of the worst type? Was not Gandhiji's spirit invoked and Ramchandra's help solicited to secure my defeat? Did not a prominent Congress worker make women voters take oath in a temple to vote against me? Did not a prominent Congress leader take the cards from many of my women voters and send them away by falsely telling them that they would be placed in the ballot box?

UNDESIRABLE THINGS

I would not refer to many other undesirable things that were done at that time. I have myself been a victim of demagogy and malpractices, but I have suffered in silence because it hurts my dignity to raise a hue and cry over a personal defeat, and secondly, because I have been averse to filing election petitions. And I would not have opened my lips even today if Mr. Gupta had not raised the question of setting proper standards of public conduct. I have cited relevant facts which will help in judging the conduct of the best amongst Congressmen, who are expected to set an example to others. I am most reluctant to refer to personal matters. But since they are relevant to the issue which Mr. Gupta has himself opened, I must claim the indulgence of the generous reader to mention them.

Why I left the Congress in 1948 is a long story and will be narrated on some other occasion. And when the public knows the true story, it will be able to judge whether I betrayed the Congress or the Congress betrayed me.

In this connection, I would like to refer to certain new-fangled ideas which have been assiduously propagated by Pandit Pant and his disciples.

It has been his pet theory that the State is identical with the ruling party. He is never tired of repeating that there is no need of an opposition in this country. One of the UP ministers only the other day expatiated on this theme in a convocation address and tried to impress on his audience that party system was a luxury under the present Indian conditions.

Democracy is a plant of slow growth in a backward country, specially when the community is divided into so many castes and creeds. The only factor in our favour is that both by tradition and temperament Indians have a rooted aversion to violence. But, is this the nurturing that is conducive to its growth, or is it not the surest way to smother it? And the most unfortunate thing is that the theory has begun to be translated into practice.

GOVERNOR'S ROLE

The Governor of a State is its constitutional head. He is the symbol of the State and not of the ruling party. I am sorry to say that the UP Governor has been functioning as a propagandist of the Congress. Only the other day he addressed the study circle of the Youth Congress—a Congress organization of students—at Allahabad. There are much better exponents of Gandhism in the country, and nothing would have been lost if he had not associated himself with the activities of a party organization. But by this act of his, the principle of democracy has suffered a grievous injury. If the parliamentary variety of democracy is not acceptable, for God's sake be honest and change the Constitution by enacting that for the next twenty years all other political parties will be outlawed. Perhaps by doing this, the task of introducing the socialistic pattern of society will also be much facilitated. I am not so much troubled by the victory of this Congress candidate or the defeat of that PSP man. What causes me mental anguish is the falsehood, hypocrisy, lack of intellectual integrity and subservience that surround us.

HUNG MY HEAD IN SHAME

I would like to refer to the latest performance of Pandit Pant at an election meeting at Lucknow. One of the postulates of democracy is that you should have an abundant faith in the people. Pandit Pant seems to have reached the conclusion that people have lost faith in the Congress: but as they have still faith in the testimony of foreigners, he thought it necessary to quote the testimonials of Marshal Tito and our Russian visitors. When I read the report of his speech, I hung my head in shame and for almost half an hour I felt restless. No leader of an independent country would sully the national honour in this manner. Unfortunately, we

have not yet got rid of our slavish mentality of British days. In the past we were not convinced of our ancient greatness until a foreign scholar pointed it out to us. So far, we have been using foreign degrees in getting employment. Now, the Congress has begun to use chits of foreigners for winning elections. National degradation could go no further.

I allude to one more matter which has relevance to this discussion. The services in this State have been demoralised and, rightly or wrongly, people have come to think that they can be made to do anything and everything. Many able and experienced civilians were sent away because they showed some spirit of independence and could not be 'yes men'. This State at one time seemed to have no use for independent officers. I am sorry, the present Chief Minister has a bad legacy to liquidate. I know he can set things right, but the question is whether his partymen will give him a real chance to do it.

A SAD DAY FOR INDIAN DEMOCRACY.

I must confess that the result of the by-election to the Lok Sabha from the Lucknow District (Central) constituency has puzzled me, and though it is not possible for anyone to come to a definite conclusion in the absence of the necessary data, it cannot be denied that suspicions have justifiably been aroused and nothing is being done to allay them. I know that the public are ready to believe any story, howsoever absurd it may be, if it is against the authorities. But if such a thing has happened in this case the responsibility for it must be laid at the doors of Congressmen themselves. As soon as the counting of the Congress candidate's votes was over, almost all Congressmen left the place, crest-fallen and dejected. It was from some of them that the public came to know that the Congress candidate had polled about 35,000 votes only and had lost the seat to the PSP candidate. No other source of information was available. It soon became public property and a large crowd soon gathered outside the building where the counting was taking place, and people were getting ready to take out a procession to celebrate the victory of Mr. Triloki Singh. There was hardly anyone in the Congress camp who thought otherwise till the result was declared by the returning officer at 9.15 p.m.

NEW CONFIRMED

The news was communicated to me by my son in the hospital about 7 30 p.m. He told me that the Congress candidate had polled about 35,000 votes only and as such it was absolutely clear that Mr. Triloki Singh was the winning candidate. The news of the defeat of the Congress candidate was

confirmed about two hours later by a Congress MLA who came to the hospital to see a patient.

The popular belief has been strengthened by the unconstitutional procedure followed by the returning officer. Unfortunately, UP does not enjoy a high reputation for conducting fair elections. The largest number of complaints addressed to the Election Commission after the general election was from UP. The story of vulnerable ballot boxes is still fresh in the public memory. Even when their vulnerability was established there were some returning officers who still refused to allow candidates to wrap the boxes in gunny bags even at their own expense.

It is Congressmen alone who can explain how it happened that they gave out the story of the defeat of their own candidate. The figure of 35,000 is also significant. The whole episode is most unfortunate. It will be a sad day for Indian democracy, if people come to think that the ultimate result of an election can be determined not by their votes but by manipulations of a few individuals dressed in brief authority.

AVADI HAS LEFT ME COLD

I had no intention of entering into this discussion, but as I was pressed hard by many comrades to express my views. I thought I should not refuse the request. But these are strictly my personal views, and in no way representative views of the Party which has not so far had the opportunity to consider the matter.

I may state that I do not regard the Congress Declaration to be a fraud. I shall, indeed, be happy if the Congress finds the true socialist road, as to me democratic socialism is above party. But to be frank, the performance at Avadi has left me cold. I shall, however, watch events with sympathy and understanding. This is all that I can promise today. My present position is best summed up in the following couplet of Ghalib:—

रगों में घुमने के ये हैं नहीं कायल
जो आंख से टपके न, वह लहू क्या है

(I am not convinced of the coursing of blood in the veins; that blood is no blood at all which does not trickle down the cheeks from the eyes.)

*Indian Socialism**

The Praja Socialist Party of India aims at a free society of equals where the common people participate in the direction of the process of production and manage their own affairs. It is, therefore, opposed to the concentration of all economic and political power in the hands of the State, which leads to totalitarianism and bureaucratic administration. For the same reason it considers Western parliamentary democracy imperfect and in need of being supplemented by Direct democracy.

The Party stands for Democratic Socialism, and therefore, advocates social ownership of the means of production. It should be borne in mind that social ownership differs from State ownership inasmuch as in State ownership the common man has no effective control over the social policies of the States.

PEACEFUL METHODS

The Party believes in peaceful methods of struggle and, in its opinion, violence is not only unnecessary but positively harmful to the Socialist cause under present conditions. The Party is convinced that today the political victory of workers and peasants is possible by parliamentary methods and direct actions, such as labour strikes and civil disobedience.

It should be remembered that the Praja Socialist Party is not a purely parliamentary party. In addition to its parliamentary programme, it lays emphasis on the necessity of waging non-violent mass struggles against injustice and exploitation.

The Party is opposed to involvement in any of the two power blocs and advocates the idea of a "Third Force" which our opponents have incorrectly identified with neutralism. The "Third Force" as we understand

(This statement by Acharya Narendra Deva reproduced below appeared in the first issue of Indian Socialist, a bulletin published by the Indian Socialist Group in London—Ed.)

it would work actively not only for the prevention of war but also for the creation of a new world society which will be free from violence and exploitation.

DISTINCT IDEOLOGY

It should be evident that it is only with the help of a new ideology that we can successfully combat the two power blocs. The ideology of the Praja Socialist Party is distinct from the ideologies which the two blocs represent.

One of them suppress human liberties and regards the individual as a cog in the machine while the other exploits vast masses of people in the interest of the capitalist class. Both systems tend to lead to violent wars.

Totalitarian Communism is a negation of democracy. It stands in clear contradiction to the teachings of Marx and Engels. A capitalist society is not a society of equals; only a minority enjoys privileges which are denied to the common people. It also tries to control the economic life of other nations and sometimes enslaves them in order to achieve this aim.

The Praja Socialist Party is opposed to colonialism and offers its moral support to all peoples who are carrying on a struggle for national independence.

Struggle For Peace

It is gratifying to note that under different names the idea of the "Third Force" is gathering strength. Some countries of Asia and Africa are powerful allies in this struggle for peace. It is necessary that our activities be co-ordinated and the active support of all possible allies be enlisted on the side of peace. It is not sufficient to prevent war; it is also necessary for conditions to be created under which wars will become impossible. The salvation of the world lies in democratic Socialism and only those who have a firm faith in democracy and Socialism can be the vanguard of the new movement for world peace.

*What Militant Socialism Means?**

My attention has been drawn to a report published in a section of the Press that I propose to make an attempt at the time of the next Annual Conference of the party to resolve internal differences in the PSP. The report is incorrect because I have no intention to place any compromise formula before the Conference.

It is, however, true that I propose to place before the delegates my own policy statement for their acceptance, but it will be with a view to introducing clarity and consistency in our own thinking, wherever they are lacking.

In this connection I would also like to point out that my "new line" as published in the *Hindustan Standard* of May 20 by its Lucknow Special Correspondent should not be taken to be a correct representation of my views.

COMING INTO VOGUE

I am sorry to note that recently expressions like militant socialism, reformism and collaborationism are coming into vogue in the Party. I do not like their use, because they have an inevitable tendency to become mere epithets of abuse without signifying anything.

I know of the so-called militant Socialists who have left the Party and joined the Congress. I know of some others whose militancy is of the type of that of a novice in the art of swimming who makes a lot of noise by striking his hands and feet in water, but makes little progress. No one becomes a leftist merely by mouthing leftist phrases. Again, militancy cannot be the only test of a genuine Socialist. No one could approach a Bengal Revolutionary in daring, suffering and sacrifice and yet we know that such of them as could not adjust themselves to the new situation after achievement of freedom simply went out of action.

* *Janta* March 20, 1955.

To lay sole emphasis on only one aspect of our task is rather dangerous. Constructive thinking and building of an efficient organisation are equally important. Discipline is the soul of an organisation and a party which develops a tendency to violate its own rules of conduct is out for self-destruction.

I make a distinction between class-struggle and *satyagraha*. In my view class-struggles have a significance of their own for every Socialist. It is only through them that workers and peasants can be made class-conscious and organised to win their rights. I also hold the view that the struggle for moral and spiritual pre-eminence in society forms part of every class conflict and if we want a *Kisan Mazdoor Raj*. I do not see in what other manner workers and peasants can qualify themselves for the assumption of political power. But we cannot forget that such mass struggles cannot be artificially engineered. It is only when the objective situation is ripe and there is a stir amongst workers that such a struggle can be launched with a fair chance of success. It should not also be forgotten that it is only by day-to-day hard work carried on for a sufficiently long time that the ground can be prepared for a successful struggle.

*UP Party Suspended**

It is with great regret that I convey to you the decision that the National Executive was compelled to take at its meetings on June 4, 5 and 6. It had to suspend the U P Party Executive and to order the suspension from primary membership of the Party for one year of the Chairman of the U P Party, Shri Gopal Narain Saxena. Before the Committee arrived at this decision, I along with Shri Triloki Singh, General Secretary of the Party, made all possible efforts to avoid this extreme step. Our efforts met with no success. The case of Shri Gopal Narain Saxena is concerned mainly with a statement he gave to the Press on April 15, 1955. Most of you must have read this statement—the main point of which was the allegation that a majority of the members of the National Executive are trying to threaten and coerce the rank and file into supporting their policies at the next annual conference.

SEXENA REFUSED TO LISTEN

Shri Triloki Singh tried to explain matters to Shri Saxena and requested him to accept his mistake and express regret. But Saxenaji refused to listen to his advice. The General Secretary was then forced to call for an explanation from him. In his reply dated the 30th April, Shri Saxena stated that he had deliberately and knowingly violated the code of conduct, and if the National Executive so desired, it could take disciplinary action against him. He said that the purpose of this violation of discipline was to force the National Executive to decide certain issues which it had been evading so far. He did not, however, specify in his letter what these issues were.

Recently, Shri P. V. G. Raju has said that a section of the Party, favouring cooperation with the Congress, was desiring to use the National Executive to gain its ends. It seems that Shri Saxena, too, is of this view. In this connection it should not be forgotten that the Policy Statement permits

*Janta, July 10, 1955.

of cooperation with other parties in certain spheres of action. For example, the PSP is working with the Communists in the Kanpur labour strike. Similarly, the Party can cooperate with the Congress in constructive activities. Shri Madhu Limaye, too, has accepted this position.

I am personally opposed to a policy of cooperation with the Congress at Government level, and this is also true of the National Executive. At its meeting on April 19, the Executive by an overwhelming majority rejected a resolution calling for a revision of the Party's attitude towards the Congress in view of the Avadi decisions. It is, therefore, clear that the National Executive approves the Allahabad Policy Statement. In the face of this evidence it is a blatant lie to say that the majority of the members of the National Executive are cooperationists.

THEORY OF EQUIDISTANCE

On the occasion of my unanimous election as Chairman at Nagpur, I had made it clear that I would act according to the accepted policy of the Party. It is indeed true that I do not agree with formulation of equidistance between the Congress and the Communist parties. Happily, this does not find a place in the Policy Statement. I am bound by that statement alone and not by what any individual may say. I challenge any one to point out a single action of the National Executive under my chairmanship that goes contrary to the Policy Statement.

It is said that the main issue involved in the dispute is one of ideology. This assertion is baseless and is made to mislead Party members and the Public. The cry of ideology is raised to cover acts of indiscipline which no reasonable person will justify. I have repeatedly declared my views on policy matters. My election as Chairman was unanimous and Dr. Lohia himself had asked me to accept the office. My choice of the four secretaries was also welcomed by him. In view of this, and the record of strict adherence by the National Executive to the Party Policy, the cry of ideology can merely be an attempt to cover one's own faults. While it is my duty to uphold the accepted policy of the party, it is also my responsibility to maintain the discipline and honour of the Party.

The UP Party Executive also violated discipline at its two meetings on April 16, 1955 and May 23, 1955. When I found that persuasions were having no effect, I decided to put pressure on the members of the Executive through provincial workers and make them see reason that way. With this end in view I talked to the workers of the eastern districts at Banaras and of the western districts at Delhi. This had a good effect. A large number of workers were opposed to this violation of discipline. After these meetings, the UP Secretary informally assured workers that the resolution passed on

April 16 would be withdrawn. Till the morning of May 23, it was hoped that Shri Madhu Limaye, a suspended member of the Party, would not be invited. But in the evening, instead of withdrawing the old resolution, the Executive made it more objectionable. As its explanation to the National Executive, the UP Party merely sent a copy of the resolution of May 23, 1955. In a covering letter the Provincial Secretary merely stated that since the National Executive had not reconsidered the case of Shri Madhu Limaye, the UP Executive had decided to request him to inaugurate the Ghazipur Conference. The UP Secretary had been told that if the resolution of April 16 would be withdrawn, no disciplinary action would be taken.

LOHIA BEGGED TO BE EXCUSED

When all efforts failed, I called an emergent meeting of the National Executive on June 4. Even during this period we continued to make efforts. I requested Dr. Lohia to attend this meeting and to reach Delhi by June 3. My purpose in calling Dr. Lohia on June 3 was that in case he did not attend the Executive, I would have the opportunity of a personal talk with him before the meeting. Dr. Lohia, however, begged to be excused. The representatives of the UP Executive were then told that if Shri Saxena expressed regret and undertook to get the two resolutions withdrawn, no disciplinary action would be taken. I received a message from him that he would not express regret and that he may be given a warning. At first the National Executive was informed that the UP Executive would meet on June 8. Subsequently, it was learnt that it would meet at Ghazipur on June 9 and 10. When the two conditions suggested to the UP Executive were not fulfilled, the National Executive was forced to take this action. I have, now, under the authority of the National Executive, nominated an *adhoc* committee for UP.

Disciplinary action against Shri Madhu Limaye was taken by the Bombay Party. According to the Constitution, such action is only to be reported to the National Executive which has no power to rescind such an action. The question of re-consideration of Shri Limaye's case by the National Executive does not, therefore, arise. This position has been clarified to persons concerned again and again.

CODE OF CONDUCT

In one of his recent statements Dr. Lohia has stated that Rule 10 of the the Code of Conduct is meant for cases of defalcation and for election disputes. about which Party members are expected not to engage them-

selves in public controversies. With great respect for Dr. Lohia, I submit that such cases are covered under rules 6, 9 and 10 of the Code. I take the liberty of quoting these rules:

Rule 6: Misappropriation of Party or public funds shall call forth immediate and drastic disciplinary action.

Rule 9: There shall be no controversy in regard to candidates set up by the Party.

Rule 10: Complaints against Party members or Committees should not be publicly ventilated. They should be referred to the Executive Committee concerned.

It is clear that Rule 10 does not refer to any specific conduct or matter but is of a general nature pertaining to discipline and its breach is punishable.

In a recent circular issued by the suspended UP Executive, it is stated that we refused to convene a meeting of the General Council to consider the case of Shri Madhu Limaye. I have to point out that under the General Council has no jurisdiction in matters relating to disciplinary actions, Section VII, Clause 2 of the Constitution makes it clear that the General Council can only take decisions regarding policy, programme and organisation of the Party, provided they are not inconsistent with the decisions of the Annual Conference. The same clause 2 also provides that such a meeting can only be called on a requisition by at least one-fourth of the total membership. No such requisition was submitted to me or to the Centre Office.

POSTPONEMENT OF CONFERENCE

The circular of the suspended Executive also alleges that the National Executive turned down its request for holding the Annual Conference in the month of June. The truth is that the suspended Executive never made any such request to the National Executive. Indeed, the schedule of elections prepared by the National Executive had to be altered because of the requests made by the States including UP. The time for enrolment in Andhra Pradesh had to be extended due to the elections there. Again, several States, including UP called for extension of dates for submission of membership lists and quotas. The extended date was fixed for April 25. Now, rains have started and under no circumstances can the conference be called before September. I am as keen as anyone else for an early session of the Annual Conference.

It is also alleged that the constitution and rules have been arbitrarily interpreted and applied. I will only submit that those who are in doubt have only to read the provisions carefully, in order to be convinced that

they have been correctly interpreted by us.

Shri Saxena has also said that the National Executive is unconstitutional as its members are not elected but nominated by the Chairman. Everybody knows that the Nagpur Convention unanimously elected me as Chairman and authorised me to nominate the Executive. At the Allahabad Conference also, three persons were asked by the Conference to choose the Executive. Would that mean that the Executive nominated by Acharya Kripalani and Dr. Lohia was unconstitutional? Perhaps, if the National Executive had merely warned Shri Saxena, he would not have called it unconstitutional.

NATIONAL EXECUTIVE SHOWED GREAT PATIENCE

Whatever I have said above will make it clear to you that the National Executive showed great patience in dealing with the matter. The objectionable resolution was published in the papers on April 16, and disciplinary action was taken as late as June 6. It must also be now obvious to you that to bring in questions of policy and ideology in this connection is misleading and has no bearing on the main issue. I am fully convinced that the views of the Party members throughout the country are quite clear on this issue and they understand and accept the need of discipline for any organisation. No reasonable person would like to be instrumental in disciplining the Party. It is unfortunate that some of our colleagues are bent on doing so. It would have been in the fitness of things for these people to observe discipline in this matter now and to raise matters of ideology and policy at the National Conference which is the proper forum for any such issues.

*All that Glitters is not Gold**

THE INDIAN NATIONAL CONGRESS AND SOCIALISM

On the eve of the Avadi Congress, I gave an interview in which I welcomed the declaration of the new policy of the Congress Government, and indicated a few steps, which, if taken, would, in my opinion, enable the Congress to find the socialist road. I am sorry to say that what happened at Avadi has not been encouraging at all. The main part of the resolution on the socialistic pattern of society was more or less negated by the speech made by the mover of the resolution. Repeated emphasis was laid on the fact that nothing new was being done and that the idea embodied in the resolution was always there.

KARACHI RESOLUTION— A DEAD LETTER

It is unfortunate that a reference was made to the famous Karachi resolution in this connection, because that resolution has always remained a dead letter. It seems that it was passed more for propaganda and effect than as a guide to action. I wonder what purpose was served by pretending that the Congress was committed to socialism ever since the Karachi Congress. It would have been a better strategy to announce that a new chapter had been opened in the annals of the Congress. I have a suspicion that the apologetic tone of the speeches was due to a desire to appease some of the old guards who found it hard to reconcile themselves to the resolution unless it was explained away in some such manner.

Again, I fail to understand why Congress leaders scrupulously avoid the use of the word 'socialism'. I do not know how they will explain the phrase 'socialistic pattern of society' without a reference to 'socialism'; so long as you use the English language there is no escape from 'isms', because he who does not believe in any 'ism' believes in nihilism. We shall cease to be

* *Janata*, March 20, 1955.

Hindus or Muslims if we do not subscribe to Hinduism or Mohammedanism. They may very well avoid the word, but why do they not give us the substance of what they want? But they will not do this either. They will not tell us what basic principles of socialism they subscribe to. It is only the economic sphere to which the resolution relates, but socialism has a much wider application. It is a philosophy of life, and as such embraces the sum total of human activities. It is a conception of behaviour which should govern human conduct, and determine human relations. You may, or may not, believe in a formal doctrine, but all the same your programme of action cannot but have a basis in some set of beliefs.

LACK OF PRECISION

The resolution deals with only one aspect of human activity, though it is the most important aspect of life. But here, too, we do not know what are the fundamental principles which will govern the economic plan. The Indian mind was well-known for its love of precision, exactitude and definition. It also made notable contributions to philosophy. But the English-educated middle-class, being an apt pupil of the Britisher, has no use for a social philosophy. It loves to indulge in vague generalities and, like the British, hopes to muddle through every crisis. Its proclaimed love of Indian culture finds expression only in its efforts to mystify the people. It sometimes seems to me that an intellectual movement is much more necessary for India's regeneration than anything else, so that much of the cant and hypocrisy prevalent today may be done away with, and the age of pure reason may be established.

Congress friends are like Buddhist Nihilists who say they have no thesis to establish, nor any doctrine to uphold, but who are always prepared to demolish the theses of other schools. The only difference between the two is that while Buddhists were masters of dialectics and their logic was devastating, our Congress friends refuse to argue. They merely make affirmations and assertions and sometimes indulge in invectives, too. Marxism is out of date, it is an outmoded doctrine, they will say, Socialist and Communist thinking belongs to a bygone age, they are dogmatic and doctrinaire; the Socialists do not know the direction in which they want to go—these are some of the statements which our friends will repeat from time to time. A great social idea which moves millions of human beings into action and claims allegiance of a fairly good number of intellectuals all the world over cannot be summarily dismissed, nor can it be killed by ridicule. It is much more true that remnants of 19th century thought linger in the Congress camp rather than elsewhere. It is a travesty of truth to say that socialists are doctrinaire. My quarrel with them is that they are too

unorthodox. Socialists may be on the wrong track, but it is not correct to say that they do not know the direction in which they want to go.

LIKE THE ULTIMATE REALITY

By refusing to define its own position the Congress has the advantage in that a planned attack and a detailed criticism are out of question. Like the ultimate reality of Indian philosophy, it chooses to keep its objectives unnamed and undefined, and thus, they do not admit of any debate or argument. But this kind of nihilism will not be tolerated much longer, and the Congress will have to come out in the open with all the weapons in its armoury.

It is a pity that the Congress still continues to cherish the illusion that it is the sole representative of the entire nation. It is not satisfied with remaining as the main stream of political life, albeit the largest and the most powerful. It does not want to be the Brahmaputra of India (I do not name the Ganga, because it is the most sacred of all rivers), but it would vie with the Indian Ocean itself. The Congress President, while speaking at Kanpur the other day, expressed the hope that Socialists and Communists would both join the Congress. Our friends want to engulf all other parties within the Congress, so that the latter may lose their identity and partake of the colour and taste of the Congress. The mentality is not conducive to the growth of democracy. Such a hope can be expressed only because the Congress does not define its social creed. Its heart is large enough to accommodate all 'isms', however mutually exclusive they may be; at present it is generous enough to accommodate in its fold *Rajas*, *Nawabs*, *Taluqdars*, industrialists and communalists.

THE REAL SOURCE OF VITALITY

If the Congress wants to revitalise itself, it should be told that the real source of all vitality is the masses. Vast sectors of our people and Indian youth remain untouched. The field is vast, the workers are few. The Congress will reap rich dividends if it pays attention to this untapped source of energy. But it would rather engage itself in the fruitless pastime of winning back to its fold, sometimes by questionable methods, those who seceded from the Congress for one reason or another. They cannot add punch to the strength of the organisation. They may add some lustre for some time, but it will be as evanescent as a dew-drop. The reservoir of mass energy has to be tapped again and again for renovating an organisation. Leaders come and go, but the organisation, if it has a true message to deliver and serve an essential social purpose, will continue to

exist—perhaps with greater vigour in spite of the secession of leaders and sometimes because of the secession itself. Every vital movement finds its own leaders. No true movement in history has failed for want of requisite leadership.

Let us not be seduced by mere announcements nor by the dynamic personality of Mr. Nehru. All that glitters is not gold. The thing that matters most is a clear enunciation of objectives and principles which will serve as a guide to the Congress in future and its practical programme and methodology. I would like to know in particular whether planning will be on capitalist lines, and whether it will be totalitarian or democratic. Too much trust cannot be placed in technicians and statisticians in this matter. I would also like to know what concrete steps are being contemplated for reducing the disparity in incomes.

If I can secure a coin of the smallest denomination of pure gold, I shall be satisfied, because I know that the alchemy of resolution will transmute all baser metal into gold when it comes in contact with it.

Comrade Asoka Mehta does not seem to have a convincing case, otherwise he would not have asked us to perform an act of faith. In this connection he wants us to remember that once we have been proved wrong and warns us that if we commit a similar mistake we shall be proved wrong again. He may prove to be a true prophet, but it is not possible for men like me to take anything on trust. Moreover, I do not agree that we were proved wrong in 1945. Was the 1942 struggle a non-violent one? If so, why did Gandhiji disown it? And is it also not true that the two world wars have completely exhausted Britain and had made it practically impossible to hold India without maintaining a large British army of occupation, which it could ill afford? And is it also not true that we had to pay a heavy price for the peaceful transfer?

Comrade Mehta asks us to try to integrate the two systems of thought which may not admit of a synthesis. Let us rather bend all our energies to humbler tasks which demand immediate attention. Let us seek more clarity and consistency in our own thinking, and eliminate those elements which have crept in without much thought having been bestowed on them and which seem rather to be fads of individuals. I, however, welcome his proposal to be more constructive in our thinking and criticism. He is perfectly right when he says that a general denunciation of Congress policies will no longer do, that we should make a careful study of the blueprints of the government and offer useful suggestions and constructive criticism. Parliamentary work can be useful only in this manner. We should try to revive the *Khoj Parishad* if possible. But all the same, greater emphasis will always have to be laid on class struggles and constructive work.

Let us perfect our organisation, and let the leading cadres of the Party cultivate mutual respect, tolerance and a spirit of comradeship and cooperation. Above all, let us not rely too much on a few leaders. Let us, instead, evolve a broad-based collective leadership. Let us not forget that for the success of democracy we do not need supermen, but a large number of men of average intelligence, efficiency and character. Above all, let us care more for quality than for numbers, because if the picture, howsoever miniature in size it may be, is true to life and responds to the needs and aspirations of the people, it will magnify a hundred-fold in a revolutionary situation. There is no reasons to be downhearted because the Congress has declared a new policy. Let us rather feel happy that the Congress has been compelled to speak in a different language. Those who are eager to be with the winning side at any cost will repent in the end. The seemingly winning side will ultimately lose the battle if it has not truth, wisdom, character and courage on its side.

EDUCATION

*Socialism: A Cultural Movement**

Socialism is not only an economic movement but also a cultural movement. It strives as much for real human culture as for a new economic order. It regards culture, like social ethics, as human, social and historical. Culture is but an expression of the social in man, cultural heritage is the collective achievement of human efforts in history. Cultural principles are products of history, results of human experience, embodiment of human urges and needs. A cultural pattern is a way of life under certain physical environment and historically determined social conditions.

Geographical environments shape cultural forms and colour and cultural outlook. Our ways of life are no doubt rooted in the soil and cannot be uprooted from it. New ways of life cannot be introduced without these being acclimatised to geographical environments. But the geographical factors represent rather limiting conditions than immediate determinants of the social situation. Much more than geographical environments, social environments and conditions mould our culture and ways of life. In spite of all their diversities, people living together unconsciously began to develop certain common social characteristics and cultural outlook. And there is a close correspondence between cultural and social conditions, between cultural progress and social evolution. Culture is considerably shaped by vital social forces and economic interests. A cultural pattern must respond to social development. Cultural lag is harmful to social growth. Any hiatus between culture and social needs causes split personality as well as disharmony in social life.

In a class-ridden society social consciousness is warped by social prejudices, caused by the conflict of economic interests and socio-economic affinities. In such a society while some cultural values are the common heritage of the entire community, many cultural values reflect class interests and prejudices. Cultural standards of different classes vary and the conflict in the cultural sphere develops. The dominant social class is able to impose upon society a cultural pattern suited to its needs and urges,

*Gaya Conference of the Praja Socialist Party, 1955.

and upholds it firmly with a view to *perpetuating its social and cultural* hold over society. For long the oppressed have been under the spell of the dominant cultural pattern mimics the ways of the dominant class, and submits to its norms almost as divinely ordained. But in course of time, as class consciousness develops, the oppressed class challenges old norms and forms, demands the recognition of human values conducive to the promotion of its interests and urges the transformation of the cultural pattern in correspondence with new vital social and economic forces and its own cultural requirements.

Faced with this cultural conflict, the protagonists of the old cultural order become offensively defensive. They uphold it in the name of the genius of the people, ascribe social ills and cultural chaos to deviation from old ways and plead for reversion. But the idea of cultural reversion is suicidal. It is positively reactionary in character. It causes life to stagnate, militates against social progress and breaks down under the stress of social dynamics.

The Congress concept of composite culture, which claims to offer a solution of the cultural integration of the Indian people, is both static and reactionary. It lacks vitality; and dynamism and fails to comprehend the cultural requirements of modern India. It upholds certain medieval cultural norms and forms as salient features of the Indian culture on the ground that they commended in the past the adherence of both Hindus and Muslims. Thus, an attempt is made to impose an essentially feudal culture on a society intended to be democratic. No wonder the Congress concept of composite culture fails to inspire modern India and is treated with contempt by all those who stand for the democratisation of our ways of life and for building up of a new culture based on the working people's social urges of socialist character.

Socialism is definitely opposed to perpetuating norms and ways of hierarchical character in the name of composite culture. It is pledged to strive for the social recognition of cultural needs and urges of the common people and for the evolution of a real human culture for the classless society free from domination and exploitation as well as from class conflicts and snobbishness. Such a culture shall be creative synthesis of humanistic elements of Indian culture and democratic socialist elements of Western culture.

Social humanism so evolved should be the basis of the socialist culture in India. Social humanism does not insist on uniformity in forms and expression. It will seek harmony and unity in variety. Cultural autonomy and equality in all forms shall be guaranteed to all citizens. They will have equal rights freely to profess and practise their religion, and to organise educational institutions and cultural associations for the study and

promotion of their religion and literature. Culture, language, traditions and special interests of the minorities shall be treated with consideration, and no law shall be passed which in any way would militate against them. No minority, whether based on religion, community or language, shall be discriminated against in any matter. All minorities would be allowed equal and full participation in all spheres of social, economic and political life. In place where a minority forms a considerable proportion of the population, the State shall provide facilities for imparting fundamental education to their children through their language upto the secondary stage. But the children of the minorities will have to study the national language as well as the official language of the State concerned so that they might play their creative role as citizens.

The unity of labour and culture is a basic principle of the socialist culture. It values human labour as a creative force of human personality and regards the refinement of conditions of its expression as essential for the cultured life for multitudes of humanity. Culture, it holds, must be shared by the entire community and should be equally accessible to all. Adequate facilities should be provided to the common people for the development of their personality; and the enjoyment of the cultural heritage of humanity. Art treasures must, then, cease to be private property. They should be nationalised and made accessible to all for study and enjoyment. All economic enterprises should be required to provide houses of culture for, and facilities for the cultural advancement of their workers. Agriculturists should be encouraged not only to preserve the natural beauty of rural India but also to acquire and enjoy cultural accomplishments of humanity. Modern amenities of decent civilised life should be so extended to the people residing in rural areas that there may be real cultural integration of urban and rural India.

The problem of the cultural advancement of the tribal people and the removal of the cultural and educational lag between the advanced and backward castes is a special concern of the socialist movement. In the past, in many countries of the world nationalists tried to secure the cultural assimilation of the tribal people through the imposition of a cultural pattern which they considered to be national in character. These efforts not only failed to achieve the objectives but also in most cases retarded the cultural progress of the tribal peoples and exposed them to exploitation and encroachments. Imposition generated inhibitions and hatred against the cultural pattern and tended to uproot the people culturally.

Democratic socialism will, therefore, try to promote their cultural progress through the process of the fusion of cultures and adaptation to new conditions. Attempts shall be made to help them in working out creative synthesis of vital elements of their indigenous cultures and the

basic principles of socialist culture. Their cultural autonomy shall be established, which shall have, besides usual municipal functions, powers of legislation and administration over tribal economy and socio-cultural affairs of the tribal people. These regional councils will be encouraged and helped to introduce the modern amenities of cultural life and the advanced technique of production in tribal regions.

The tribal people will, thus, realise and achieve their progress through their own constructive co-operative efforts with necessary encouragement and assistance of the State and advanced sections of the Indian nation. They will be able to evolve a culture which will be socialist in content, but retain such cultural forms and ways dear to them as do not militate against the spirit of the new culture.

India is a multi-lingual nation, misconceived as a multi-national State by Indian communists. Ethnologically, culturally and historically there are much closer ties between different linguistic units in India than those between different linguistic groups of Switzerland, which is acknowledged a nation by all competent authorities. There is no comparison between the socio-cultural structures of India and the Soviet Union, and therefore the analogy of the Soviet Union is not applicable to India. Under Czarist regime the Russian Empire was composed of many linguistic communities, most of which were in their socio-cultural structures poles apart from the Great Russian nation and were smarting under its domination.

There was no attempt on the part of the Great Russian people to forge national unity with other linguistic communities of their empire, and so, on the eve of the Bolshevik Revolution, Russia was faced with conflicts of national liberation from the Russian domination. All this cannot be said of India. In their socio-cultural structures almost all important linguistic communities are alike. They share certain common cultural traditions and have made their own contribution to the common cultural heritage of India. This cultural unity helped the growth of national unity in course of a common struggle for freedom against foreign domination. So, the problem of the cultural autonomy of different linguistic groups of India is not a problem of international character. It is essentially a problem of the redistribution of India into constituent states and regional units in such a way as to ensure equal cultural autonomy to all, commensurate with either stature or requirements of national development.

Indian communists, who are very fond of Soviet analogies and who on that account glibly talk of the right of secession of linguistic communities, must also remember that in the Soviet Union the demand for separation is treated as counter-revolutionary, and the right of secession is not conceded to all national units but to only such of them, less than ten per cent of the total number, as satisfy three important conditions—(1) the unit concerned

is not situated in the middle of the Soviet Union, (2) the unit concerned is large enough to form an independent State, and (3) the region concerned is an integrated national unit. It must also be remembered that in the Soviet Union the Russian people are treated as the "elder brother", and that the conception of the national character of linguistic communities is almost submerged in the idea of "the monolithic unity of the Soviet people", increasingly stressed by Soviet statesmen.

We, socialists, denounce the right of secession of linguistic communities of India, but at the same time also refuse to accept any linguistic community as the elder brother and do not think in terms of monolithic unity. We stand for national unity on terms of equality of all linguistic communities. We say what we mean. So, we do not think it proper to speak of the right of secession in one breath and to punish its demand as counter-revolutionary in another breath. We are convinced that all important linguistic groups are equal members of the Indian nation and that no group can in any way claim superiority over others. To us the claim of superiority is a negation of democracy, the denial of equality, the first fundamental principle of socialist society. The idea of monolithic unity of autonomous nations is, in our opinion, a contradiction in terms, and is possible only in a dictatorship which talks of autonomy but imposes rigid uniformity in all matters of importance. We have no doubt in our mind that a real international unity can never be monolithic in character. It cannot be compared with the rigidity and uniformity of a single block of stone shaped into pillar or monument, which the metaphor implies.

To promote the cultural unity and advancement of the Indian people, the Party will recognise Hindi as the common national language of India, but will also deem it its duty to promote equal advancement of all the regional languages. Steps will be taken to encourage their proper study even in States of which the regional language concerned is not the official language. At least in big States academies of Indian languages and literatures will also be established and other possible efforts will be made to promote cultural fellowship among Indians of different linguistic units.

Democratic socialism is convinced of the justice and urgency of the equality of sexes. Inequality is inhuman, and the cultural backwardness of the fair sex is retardatory. Great social changes are impossible without the feminine ferment. Socialism is, therefore, opposed to such cultural norms and forms as have relegated women to a dependent and secondary place in society and denied to them opportunities and facilities of cultural advancement. It wishes them to enjoy the status of equality and independence. It not only recognises their rights to employment in services of all grades and types and to equal pay for equal work, but also insists on their equal cultural advancement and on their claim to social equality in

all respects. It treats motherhood with consideration, regards child and maternity welfare as joint responsibility of the family and the community, and acknowledges woman's equal right to education and to participation in the cultural life of the nation.

Culture, happiness and joy will, thus, cease to be monopoly of the privileged few. Every one shall have the means of decent cultured life and be entitled to happiness and joy in association with others. The development of each shall be the conditions of the development of all, and man shall be the real master of his destiny. His creative genius shall have free expression, and both artisans and artists shall be equally encouraged to add to human happiness and joy. None will have to pamper to vagaries, vanities and vulgarities of the rich. Nor shall anyone be required to submit his art to the fiat of the State officials the way it is done in the Soviet Union. Folklores which are free expression of the joys, sorrows, urges and genius of the common man will in a socialist society be treated with much greater respect and command much greater attention of socialist artists than the art developed in feudal courts. This does not mean that the art and architecture of feudal and capitalist eras shall be allowed to decay. Every attempt shall be made to preserve them and develop their technique in response to the new urges and needs.

Artists and litterateurs shall continue to be guided in their work by the trinity of truth, human good and beauty, to use our ancient terms *Satya*, *Shiva* and *Sundaram*. Art will mean realism, and uphold truth. It will symbolise human happiness and joy realisable through free collective efforts. It shall no doubt stand for harmony of life with nature. But it shall also stand for harmony in society realisable through the harmonisation of emotion and that of social forces in a social system free from class conflicts, exploitation and domination. The three shall be treated as inseparable constituents of an organic whole. Therefore, truth shall be so expressed as to promote happiness and harmony. No attempt shall be made to mix up happiness and joy with falsehood and discord. Nor shall beauty be devoid of truth, social happiness and virtue. A synthetic expression of the three in a atmosphere of freedom is needed to produce art of permanent value.

Indian art is largely symbolic in character and may continue to be so in socialist India. But then art will cease to symbolise archaic mythological traditions in meaningless imageries. It will symbolise human values and social ideas of free society as well as social urges and humane sentiments of its members in proper understandable forms, and typify a personality striving against social injustices and his own evil propensities and devoted to the promotion of general happiness and development.

For the birth of a new society which is democratic in character and free from domination and exploitation, the system of education will have to be

radically transformed. Knowledge is power; its universalisation is, therefore, necessary for equality and justice. So in a socialist society culture and education will cease to be the monopoly of the privileged classes and every citizen will receive the benefit of modern education. Education will be gradually made free even upto the university stage for every child, and every boy and girl will receive education according to his or her aptitude and ability and needs of the community. Sons and daughters of classes and communities which have so far been deprived of the benefits of education will receive special attention. They will not only receive free tuition but also be given maintenance grants from the States.

No profession will any longer remain the close preserve of any special caste or section of the community. Talented young men and young women of the poorer sections of the community will be paid stipends and maintenance allowances to enable them to receive specialised training in different professions. Adult educational institutions shall be established for peasants, workers and others producers close to their homes and places of work. These institutions will make provisions for vocational training as well as for cultural and educational activities. As genius exists in all strata of society and there is no race or class of human beings who are not capable of assimilating the cultural heritage of mankind, the universalisation of education will contribute to the general cultural advancement of the nation, increase its intellectual capital and enable it to be at par with other civilised nations of the world. More emphasis will be laid on the teaching of science and technology. Vocational schools and colleges of technology will be opened in large numbers to serve the needs of an underdeveloped country. But the teaching of science will be combined with the teaching of humanities so that technical education may be imbued with a social purpose and noble ideals. Physical, moral and intellectual education will be given their due place in the scheme of education.

Attempt shall be made to cultivate in youth initiative, civic consciousness, social awareness, habit of co-operation, respect for democratic ideals and traditions and the feeling of sanctity for public property and social responsibility. With this end in view, alongwith theoretical training in citizenship, healthy extra-mural activities on democratic lines shall be prompted under the guidance of the teachers imbued with aforesaid moral ideals. To infuse the entire youth of the community with the democratic spirit and the feeling of national unity, it is also necessary that all should receive education in common schools. So, special schools opened for sons of aristocracy and of high officials of the State will be abolished and the denominational and communal institutions shall be converted into common schools.

The unity of knowledge and work is a fundamental principle of socialist

education. The mind is not in habit of passive, uncritical absorption of ideas. The source of knowledge is observational reality, which is an active process of experimentation, manipulation and critical testing. Education must not, then, be a process of pressing ideas upon pupils constrained to imbibe them. Theoretical education should rather go hand in hand with the productive labour and the actual manipulations of the objects by the pupils.

Such an education will have to be planned, bearing always in mind that the advancement of learning and research can be promoted only in an atmosphere of academic freedom, where teachers enjoy freedom of expression of thought and are respected in society and do not suffer from material wants. For the system of socialist education, society needs teachers who are not only specialists in their own branches of knowledge but also imbued with the spirit of the age and conversant with the aspirations and need of contemporary life. It is their duty to imbue their pupils with the spirit of democracy, the love of liberty, the thirst for justice and the will to progress; and this mission requires corresponding virtues in them. In short, a teacher must have good education, a strong moral sense and enthusiasm for social service. Only then can we humanise the school, exercise moral influence over youths of the country, maintain discipline, and prepare youths for the fulfilment of the duties of democratic citizenship.

As a first step the Government should endeavour to wipe off illiteracy and provide free and compulsory fundamental education of eight years as soon as possible. It must also promote social education in democratic citizenship, open vocational institutions, organise technological education and scientific research on a wide scale and grant liberal stipends and maintenance allowance to talented youths of poor families. Special attention should be paid to the education of the children of tribal people and backward communities, including those of scheduled castes. A scheme of education in all its detail is to be prepared in consultation with educationists of wide experience. Much has already been done in this direction. But more is needed, what is needed most is that the Government should make up its mind as to what programme of education it wishes to introduce.

*University Education: Its Problems **

I want to say some thing about education. In the **Presidential Address** only one paragraph is devoted to education, but unfortunately no mention has been made about university education. We all know that standards are going down. People generally complain of indiscipline and say that universities are seats of intrigue. That is partly true. But what is the remedy? No remedy has been suggested. Mere appointment of a Commission or a Committee will not bring us nearer the solution of the problem. There has been a plethora of commissions and committees both in States and the Centre. I remember that the University Commission reported more than three years ago, but nothing has been done so far and nothing will be done for the simple reason that the financial stringency of the Government of India does not allow it to implement the recommendations made by the Commission. So, many committees have already met in different States and so much material has been accumulated that it is quite enough to help the Government in taking decisions. But they are not in a position to take decisions because our resources are slender and most inadequate. A knowledge of man's limitation is the first postulate of wisdom and it is not always wise to seek progress in all possible directions irrespective of the resources at our command. Let us concentrate on two or three vital and urgent needs of the people. The projects that we have taken lately in hand have received the hearty co-operation of the masses because they tend to satisfy some of their vital and urgent needs. This is why we could enlist their support and co-operation. But where is the leadership which will provide guidance, will show them the path from day-to-day? The question is to do something and do it at once because time is the essence. We cannot afford to waste time any further in ordering elaborate enquiries and investigations. The reasons why these universities are not coming up to the

* Based on speeches published National Herald, August 2, 1949, September 7, 1948, November 21, 1948.

mark are well-known to us. We know their shortcomings. We know their defects. An elaborate enquiry is not needed for the purpose. That will be sheer waste of time when we know that we cannot do much about it for financial reasons. It will only lead to further discontent, and to dissatisfaction.

I would say that we should do something to change the attitude of the masses. The co-operative movement is a new way of thinking and living. It is not merely a question of joint farming or consumers' co-operatives. There are many types of co-operatives which can be established. It must serve every need and aspect of rural life. That is what is expected of the co-operative movement, and this will be possible only if non-official agencies are associated in a very large measure with the administrative machinery. These Departments will not be able to deliver the goods. I know them well in my own province. I can say that many of these so-called co-operatives exist only on paper. They do not function, and wherever they function, they function in a dull and feeble manner. They lack vitality, they lack life. How can you infuse life into them ? Unless those people who have high ideals are in them, who want to serve the people, who know the urges, hopes and fears, the needs and requirements of the villagers, this movement is bound to fail and the problems of the small uneconomic holdings will not be solved. My suggestion so far as the landless labourers are concerned is that whenever you reclaim fresh land, that land must be given to the landless labourers. They should have precedence over all other classes, because they do not have the equipment, they do not have the means and so they can be expected to join the co-operatives. When you get initial success, that initial success will create a suitable atmosphere, so that poor peasants will also take to co-operative farming.

One word more. Something should be done to create leadership of the right type. The Report itself has based its success on leadership at all levels. But nothing is being done to create this new leadership. We may be very proud of having acquired a high status in the council of nations, our name may stand high in international affairs, because of the contribution that we have made in trying to establish peace, but at that will be of no avail to us, if in domestic matters we fail and do not succeed in achieving economic progress and security.

PROBLEMS OF UNIVERSITIES

The whole system of education has to be reorganised into an interesting pattern. It has also to be invested with a social purpose. Education cannot be divorced from life and it must satisfy the needs and aspirations of contemporary society. These have to be determined with reference to the

special needs of each country in its world context.

The question is: What is the social philosophy that should guide us in reorganising our education system ? Since there is not a single philosophy universally accepted in our country, we have to adopt the basic principles of our Constitution as constituting the basis of our social philosophy. These have received widest acceptance, although it is true that there are sections of the population who do not subscribe to them. But in a matter like this complete unanimity cannot be achieved. All that we can do is to keep these basic principles in the forefront. Democracy is one of such principles; social justice and equality of opportunity to all is another.

GOOD CITIZENS

A student should be prepared not only to meet the challenge of life and earn a living but also to discharge his obligations as a citizen of a free State. He should not only be a producer but also a good citizen. Democratic living is based on human values of equal liberty and equal opportunity to all, irrespective of race, religion, sex and economic background. The democratic spirit should permeate the entire life of the campus. And as we are a part of an international society, we should also promote international understanding and goodwill. We should, therefore, make a sympathetic study of other cultures, especially those of our neighbours.

We have also to transmit our ancient heritage to the present generation, but we have to tell them how to make a critical appraisal of it. The significant and vital elements have to be isolated from decadent elements and conserved. A knowledge of the past is essential for a proper understanding of the existing situation. Without this, the problems of today cannot be understood, much less solved.

A university has been defined as a corporation or society which devotes itself to a search after knowledge for the sake of its intrinsic value. Research is, therefore, an essential part of the work of every university. It has been truly said that apart from research, university education of the right kind is impossible. Again, frontiers of knowledge are being constantly extended and old views and conceptions are being re-examined and corrected. Education has thus become a continuous process and a teacher who does not keep himself abreast of his subject and does not acquaint himself with fresh discoveries cannot discharge even the ordinary function of a teacher.

Unfortunately, our universities are not fulfilling their primary function. Very little research is being done on the Arts side and what little is being done is not of much value. It is sad but true that the universities have made very little contribution to the study of our social problems. They should be

centres of our intellectual life to which citizens should turn for guidance on all social and economic questions. But very few teachers apply themselves to a critical study of modern movements and current thought.

MORE RESEARCH

Scientific research also stands in real danger of slow extinction. I wish that we should give more attention to this problem. We need rather urgently competent and able scientists for building up the country.

Another function of a university is to train young men and women for leadership and administration of public affairs. In an underdeveloped country like India, there is a great demand for trained personnel and it is the duty of the universities to satisfy this demand.

The programme of university studies should, therefore, be altered to fulfil the objects set forth above and its administration should be liberalised to symbolise the new spirit which should animate it. As is obvious, much would depend on the quality and character of teachers that are recruited. In order that highly qualified teachers may be available in sufficient numbers, we shall have to provide adequate salaries, security of tenure and working facilities.

It is general complaint that discipline among students has very much deteriorated. The causes of indiscipline are to be found in the environment and again this indiscipline is not peculiar to the student community. We must remember that an average student suffers from a sense of frustration and the struggle for life has become very acute. With the abnormal growth of the size of the class, the old intimate contact between the teacher and the student has also disappeared. The idea of relationship between the teacher and the taught has also changed. The old type of coercive discipline is quite out of place. The teacher has to remember that true discipline is not imposed from above and that it comes from within. He has to influence the life of his students by his personal example and help them in developing habits of mind which lead to good acts.

Another complaint is that university standards are rapidly deteriorating. But before apportioning blame, it should be borne in mind that unless proper standards are maintained in secondary schools, it would not be possible for the universities to check the process of deterioration. As a matter of fact, the system of secondary education should be a complete, self-sufficient and integral whole. Courses of various types should be provided to suit different aptitudes, interests and talents. They should generally prepare students for life and employment but there will also be a type of school course which will lead to the university. In this way, the school curriculum will not be dominated by university requirements and

today's predominance of the literary type will disappear. When there are new openings for employment, many who seek admission to universities today, knowing not what else to do, will deflect from following such a course. This process will automatically lead to a rise in university standards. The Intermediate classes should be abolished and the undergraduate course should be of three years.

LIBRARIES

Another necessary reform is to encourage the free use of the library. University students should be initiated into habits of reading. A section of the university library should contain text-books only for the use of poor students who cannot afford to buy expensive books.

*Gandhiji and Students**

The youth constitute the true wealth of the nation and every great movement which wants to succeed, must make an appeal to it. It is but proper that during their period of tuition and preparation, the youth should be made conscious of the great task that awaits them and of the obligations which they owe to society. Woe be unto them if during the formative period of their life they keep themselves confined to their studies only and remain uninfluenced by those powerful movements which shape the destinies of nations and initiate a new era of constructive effort. And those leaders of society have no conception of their duties, if they fail to recognise the strategic position which the youth of a nation occupy in any such movement. A new order of society can be built only if the youth take a hand in its fashioning and give it its talents, devotion, sacrifice and willing service. The task of national regeneration and construction can be efficiently accomplished only if every youth is made to recognise its significance in the scheme of his individual life.

Gandhiji was a great seer and leader of men. He instinctively realised that if his mission was to succeed, the student community should be made acquainted with his philosophy of life and its enthusiastic co-operation should be secured. He appeared on the political scene of India at a historic moment. Just after the First World War Asia was resurgent with a new life and everywhere people were ready to march forward and were in search of a captain who could guide and lead them. Gandhiji placed himself at the head of his people and gave them a matchless weapon of struggle and thus gave them a new confidence and a new faith in themselves. His first *satyagraha* movement met with a tremendous response from the people and gave us the first glimpses of the rich potentialities of a mass movement in India. When Gandhiji started the non-cooperation movement, he appealed to the students to give up their studies and participate in the struggle for freedom. At his bidding a very large number of students gave up their

* Acharya Narendra Deva; A commemoration Volume; National Book Trust India New Delhi, 1971.

studies and became political workers and it is they, who mainly constitute today the real core of the Congress organisation.

At this time he preached against the system of education which had been established in our country to serve the political ends of our foreign rulers. He pointed out how English education had emasculated us, constrained our intellect and stifled our originality. He condemned the artificial value put on English education and the infatuation for it which was so common amongst the English-educated middle class of the country. He regarded it as a superstition that a knowledge of the English language was necessary to imbibe ideas of liberty and called upon the people to shed the fear that if education was imparted through the medium of the mother tongue or the national language, we would meet with a catastrophe in the cultural field and would relapse into an era of comparative barbarity. But he should not, however, be understood to mean that he was against the study of science and foreign languages. All that he wanted to impress on his countrymen was that the national language should occupy its proper place in the scheme of national education. He made national education an integral part of the constructive programme of the Congress and under his influence a large number of educational institutions came into being which were free from all governmental control and which imparted education through the medium of the provincial language. It is true that many of them languished and ultimately perished when the high tide of the political movement had receded. But there is no doubt that they not only served as an arsenal for the national movement but also had a nationalising influence on the prevailing system of education.

It is regrettable that the infatuation for the English language still powerfully grip the minds of our educated countrymen. Though, on a plebiscite being taken, they will record their vote in favour of the national language, it is a fact that the English-educated community, including University students, still take an unnatural delight and pride in conducting their affairs in the foreign tongue. And it is because of this infatuation that we are afraid of adopting the provincial language all at once as the medium of instruction at the University stage. We are afraid of taking risks and making bold experiments. Foreign education had an enervating influence on us and made us mere imitators. Moreover, being an ancient people whose history is richly laden with hoary traditions, we find it difficult to lay aside our old burdens and to march forward with rapid strides. Gandhiji gave a rude shock to many of our cherished beliefs and superstitions and those who accuse him of taking a narrow view of education, forget that his attack was mainly directed against those evils of foreign education which had robbed us of our originality and distorted our view of life. His theory of education was indeed comprehensive because he

advocated an all-round balanced education in which, in his own words, 'the intellect, the body and the spirit have all full play and develop together into a natural, harmonious whole'. He was of the view that a sound and vigorous intellect could be developed, not by mere academic knowledge but only when it was firmly rooted in and tested from day-to-day by experience. Gandhiji did not lay much stress on book-learning which did not give us true knowledge and a conception of good life. Any system of education which was indifferent to the development of character and personality could not meet with his approval. He wanted our young men to be of high character, to be generous and kind in personal relations, to be of liberal outlook and to have a high sense of duty towards their less fortunate brethren. Above all, he wanted them to dedicate their lives to the service of the poor and the humble and settle in villages as servants of the people where they would have an unlimited scope for service and research. He advised them to combine service with their calling or profession. He cautioned them against self-indulgence and impressed on them the need of cultivating self-restraint and leading a disciplined life. He wanted them to have a first-hand knowledge of conditions of the people and to engage themselves in constructive work. Even in their student days, they could utilise their vacations for excursions in villages and begin village work as part-time workers. He gave suggestions on the subject and advised them to organise spinning, teach rules of sanitation and conduct literacy classes for adults.

The one theme he constantly harped upon was that students should take a lead in the matter of social reform. For this purpose he advised them, on occasion, even to revolt against their parents. He condemned the degrading practice of demanding a dowry and recommended excommunication of young men who wanted a price for marriage. Gandhiji's words were: 'Any young man who makes dowry a condition of marriage discredits his education and his country and dishonours womanhood.' He asked girls to remain unmarried rather than agree to marry a young man who demanded a price. He carried on a crusade against this and other degrading customs of our country. He preached against caste system and wanted to remove those artificial barriers which divided and sub-divided us into innumerable little groups. He also advocated *satyagraha* by students to fight against these social evils.

Gandhiji was not against students taking part in politics but they could not afford to have party politics. Politics divorced from ethics had no attraction for him. His constant effort was to spiritualise and purify politics. He wanted students to study political and social problems of their country and also to participate in the national struggle for freedom by suspending their studies. They could also resort to political strikes and take part in

political demonstrations while students only at the time of big national upheavals. But ordinarily a student should pursue his studies and should not try to be an active politician. In his opinion the students should have the greatest freedom of expression of opinion but should not have freedom of action. He did not generally approve of their dissipating their energies in making ineffective demonstrations. On one occasion when Jawaharlalji was imprisoned, students sought his advice. if they could go on strike as a protest against his incarceration. But Gandhiji advised them not to resort to strike. According to him, they could hold meetings and have peaceful processions, but they could not absent themselves from college as a mark of protest except with the consent of the head of the institution. Except in national emergencies, Gandhiji did not ordinarily like students to resort to strikes. Above all, he wanted them to engage themselves in some constructive activity. The advice is of peculiar value at the present moment when new responsibilities and obligations have devolved upon us by achievement of our freedom.

The country needs the services of a large army of workers for the task of national construction. He wanted the students' conferences to do organised work in the field of social reform and this kind of work has an urgency of its own. But while students' organisations hold deliberations on questions of national and international importance of a political nature, they hardly pay any attention to the many social evils which disfigure our society and sap its vitality. It is necessary that energies of the student community should be directed into constructive channels. It, therefore, behoves the educational authorities to extend extra-mural activities and provide greater opportunities to students to participate along with their teachers in the life and work of the community in which they live. But, alas, everyone wants to share or capture power and there is no atmosphere in this country for real solid work. This is most unfortunate for, above all other interests, the need of the moment is constructive effort. The task is so stupendous that Government agencies alone cannot cope with it. There is so much ignorance and apathy in the country that there will be resistance of millions even to the introduction of those reforms which ultimately prove beneficial to them. We all know that the co-operative movement will rejuvenate country's life, but it is no easy task to persuade our villagers to take to it with enthusiasm. Hard work will have to be put in by a large band of selfless workers and it is only by persuasion and propaganda carried on for many years on a large scale that we can ever hope to succeed. But for this it is necessary that we should have a background of faith. Gandhiji taught us that we should have an indomitable faith in the good cause that we espouse and should never be deterred from the path of virtue, even if we are all alone at the moment. His whole life was a sermon

on work with faith. We want men of faith who are ready to devote their lives to the service of their fellowmen without any hope of reward. The revolution that was initiated by Gandhiji is not yet complete. It is only its first phase that has been accomplished. We are living in an era of social revolution to the success of which we have to bend all our energies. But for this signal achievement we want a band of selfless workers who have both ability and character to accomplish the concrete tasks that are set to them. Gandhiji again and again emphasized the importance of constructive work. We did not listen to him when he was alive. But now we can no longer ignore his advice and, if we do, we do so only at our peril.

*Education for All**

Democracy is not only a form of government but also a way of life and, therefore, the ideal of democracy is not to be confined to the political sphere only but has to be extended to every other sphere of human activity. Newly-born nations that borrow foreign democratic constitutions only in imitation or simply in the belief that this is a sign of being regarded as progressive cannot succeed in establishing a truly democratic form of government if they have not developed democratic sentiments in them. Democracy is a matter of habit and tradition and is the result of a long and painful effort. The democratic tradition has to be built up and the democratic sentiment cultivated. The people who are torn by castes and creeds and who recognise privileges built on birth or wealth, race or creed will have to make conscious efforts in all possible ways to achieve the democratic way of life. Democracy must become a creed and a living faith with the people and it must direct and govern their entire life and behaviour.

It is a truism that unless we develop the social and political consciousness of the people, we cannot make democracy function successfully. Democracy means an intelligent and active participation of all the section of the people in the political life of the country. People's apathy towards political and economic problems of the country has to be fought and their interest has to be stimulated in the public affairs of the country.

Universal education is, therefore, the first requirement of democracy. Our culturally backward classes and areas must receive special attention and no efforts should be spared to bring them speedily in line with the more advanced countries. Without socialisation of culture we cannot have a community of free men in our country who are capable of co-operative with one another for promotion of the common good.

But a knowledge of the three R's is not enough. It is only the first step. It

* Broadcast by Acharya Narendra Deva from Lucknow on 18 November 1948, in the series "Democracy in Action."

simply opens the portals of knowledge. It enables a man to read only cheap novels and stories but does not enable him to educate himself or to develop an intelligent social behaviour. He is also unable to make a study of the social, economic and political problems that may agitate the country from day-to-day. A commercialised world exploits these literary projects for its own ends. It produces cheap and vulgar literature in tons to pander to the baser instincts of mankind in order to make enormous profits and the book trade makes phenomenal progress not in educating the masses but in leading them into false ways of life. A merely literate community also stands in great danger of being misled by dictators and lovers of power. As Graham Wallace has put it, "politics is the exploitation of the subconscious". These misleaders of men use the various instruments of propaganda in arousing the instinctive urges of mankind for fomenting national wars and programmes with a view to gaining their narrow political ends. The Press of every country is a powerful instrument of public education. For the masses this is the only source of information and they solely depend upon it for the information of their views on public questions. In every free country political parties run their party papers to propagate their ideology and party programme. These organs are not conducted for profit but simply to provide political education for the electorate. Generally, they are run at a great financial loss and the deficit is made good by public contributions or by party funds. But when vast masses of people become literate, a new type of newspaper enters into the field as a serious competitor. Its object is not to give any political education to the people. Its object is just to make money and for sordid gain it appeals to the baser instincts of men and gives them exciting and thrilling news about love affairs, murders and other crimes. It does not ennoble and uplift but only debases human nature. It is not interested in giving education to the masses. It professes no such aims. It is interested in the political exploitation of the weaknesses of human nature. This type has yet to emerge in our country but it will not take long to come into existence. There is another type also which has begun to make its appearance in our country. It is the type which represents industrial interests of the country. Our industrialists do not form a political party of their own. It pays them better to control the Press and influence both the Government and the people in so many direct and indirect ways. Several chains of newspapers have come into existence in our country which are owned by industrialists. Political parties are finding it more and more difficult to run their papers. Advertising agencies are becoming more and more class-conscious and are less willing now to give their advertisements to papers of the Left.

Proper political education of the people is possible only when a variety of opinions is presented to it and it is asked to apply its critical judgment and

make its choice. The State should, therefore, aim at imparting basic education to the people so that they may develop their critical faculties and acquire a capacity for self-direction. Civic education which does not stop at the nation but is comprehensive enough to include international obligations must receive a high priority. We should not forget that we are moving towards a world community and, therefore, all our educational projects should be prepared from that point of view. We cannot be indifferent to what is going on in other parts of the world and live in isolation. Our education should be such as may enable us to live happily and securely in the world of today. We must cultivate international goodwill and fellowship and should always be prepared to work for peace and to fulfil our international obligations.

It may be said that the task is stupendous but whatever the magnitude it has to be attempted and accomplished if we want to live a full and rich life. A glorious destiny awaits all of us only if we are conscious of our responsibilities and are wise and courageous enough to discharge them.

With this in view, our educational system needs overhauling. It needs a new orientation and a new philosophy to secure international peace and co-operation for the promotion of human welfare. Coming nearer home, the education for the masses should be so planned as to develop in them a healthy, non-communal outlook on life. New democratic and human values have to be inculcated and a new pattern of social behaviour has to be emphasized. Moreover, education should not stop at a particular age but should be a continuous process. We are living in an ever-changing world and, therefore, our minds need reconditioning from time to time. Apart from imparting literary education, an effort should be made on behalf of the State to educate the people from time to time on important public issues. To take an illustration. It was the duty of the Government to see that the draft Constitution prepared by the Constituent Assembly was discussed publicly in every town and village. That would have been a really wholesome education for our people. Though the Assembly has not been elected on the basis of adult suffrage and, therefore, does not derive its authority from the people, yet, if the Government had made adequate arrangements and afforded proper facilities for a public discussion of the draft Constitution on a nationwide scale and had thus created a vital and genuine interest in it among the people, it would have made some amends for the initial defect. The Soviet Constitution, before its adoption in 1936, was discussed by the Russian people in the village society and the workers' unions and it aroused keen and lively interest among them. In this manner, the State provided a really valuable piece of political education for the people. On the other hand, in our country the new Constitution is being finalised and people do not seem to be interested in it. The political apathy

and indifference of our people is no valid excuse for this sad state of affairs. The masses are ignorant and they cannot be blamed for not taking any interest in the framing of the new Constitution. It was the primary duty of the Government to take all necessary steps to stimulate public interest in such a vital matter. In the words of Disraeli: "it is our paramount duty to educate our masses and we are certainly failing in our elementary duty towards them if we do not tell them how their destiny is being shaped before their eyes and what charter of rights and obligations is being prepared for them." It is only thus that they can be made conscious of their new status and of the new objectives for which the State of free India will stand in future.

This is just an illustration in elucidation of my point that all opportunities of mass education on important questions should be taken advantage of by the State. This is a much more powerful instrument of education than the mass literacy campaign can ever hope to be. Besides, all media of instruction should be pressed into service by the State.

In India, however, we shall have to do much more than merely formulate an educational programme for the masses. The spirit of democracy symbolises a desire to achieve equality. Democracy as it grows does not remain confined to the political sphere only. It has a tendency to permeate other spheres of life as well. It demands equal opportunities for education and employment, it demands social equality and abolition of all privileges based on birth or wealth and gradually comes to insist on eliminating economic differences as well. The sphere of democracy is ever enlarged, until the conception of full democracy dominates the life of the people.

We are in the initial stages of democratic progress. The Hindu social organisation is a hierarchy of castes and perpetuates social inequalities. We have also placed vast sections of our people beyond the pale of civilisation and we treat them as sub-human beings. Again, there are aborigines who are at a very low level of culture and we have done practically nothing to elevate their moral and material condition. These social and cultural inequalities constitute a great barrier to the growth of the democratic sentiment among our people, and unless we start a crusade against these institutions and customs which perpetuate inequalities and sanction inhuman treatment to our fellowmen, we cannot hope to make any progress towards the realisation of our new objectives.

Side by side with the extension of mass education and the enactment of laws which tend to remove social inequalities, we want a powerful co-operative movement in the countryside to develop democratic habits among the rural population. The co-operative movement is not only an economic movement which eliminates the middleman's profit and makes

agriculture more remunerative, but is also the initiator of a new pattern of social relationship which is based on co-operation in place of competition and which promotes a spirit of fraternity and fellow-feeling among the people.

Whatever non-official efforts may be made in this direction, the State is under an obligation widely to diffuse and disseminate among the people a knowledge of the basic assumptions of its political philosophy and to create a new form of human behaviour which may be more in consonance with these assumptions. It is only in this manner that an intelligent social behaviour from the people can be guaranteed and it is only this education which can serve as a protective armour in a moment of crisis against those dark and reactionary forces which from time to time raise their heads and threaten to destroy those values of human existence which the State is committed to conserve and promote.

*A Plea for Nagri Script**

I am for *Hindustani* written in Nagri script. As a matter of fact, I stand for the abolition of all the provincial scripts. If we want to promote inter-provincial unity, we should know each other's language and literature. Multiplicity of scripts stands in the way of realisation of this object. As there is no organised relationship between a language and its script, there should be no serious objection to the acceptance of this proposal.

A movement should be initiated in favour of adoption of one single script for the entire country. The *Devanagiri* script, with suitable modifications, is the only script which could aspire for this position. New dictrotical marks will have to be adopted for those sounds which are wanting in the national language. As, in the near future, illiteracy would be rooted out from our country and we will be called upon to produce healthy literature for the vast masses of people and not only for classes, it is necessary that the vehicle of expression should be as close the spoken language of the people as possible.

NEW WRITING STYLE

We shall have to revise some of our old notions and have to give up the contempt which we have for the language of the masses. There was the time when *Bhasha* was despised by the advocates of *Sanskrit*, but when great artists made it a suitable vehicle for expression of poetic thoughts and clothe it with beauty the old feeling of scorn and contempt gradually gave way to a feeling of respect and affection.

As modern Hindi was a tendency to be richly laden with Sanskrit words, it is all the more necessary that Hindi writers of note should develop a new style of writing, which is as close to the people as possible. Only such a style can claim to be natural and vital, and it will start new healthy trends in our national literature.

* Based on the speeches published in *National Herald* on November 5, 1947; August 18, 1948; September 7, 1948; and December 5, 1948.

I purposely call this language *Hindustani* because present-day Hindi and Urdu suffer from artificiality and are products of middle class culture.

There should be one uniform terminology of scientific words. For this purpose, international terminology should be adopted as far as possible. In any case, the international symbols and formulae will have to be retained. Those words which have gained currency should be retained, irrespective of their origin. It is true that the help of Sanskrit will have to be taken in coining many new words and I hope none will grudge it.

MEDIUM OF INSTRUCTION

It is universally admitted that the mother tongue should be the medium of instruction up to the high school stage. Different opinions are expressed on this question at the university stage by the various committees appointed by the Government of India.

The view that English had served one good purpose at least, inasmuch as it had given us a common medium of thought and expression, and had acted as the unifying force in the country has not found much support. It is felt that at the university stage also education should be imparted in the mother tongue.

How the affairs of the national parliament can be conducted if a national language is not made the medium of instruction at the university stage ?

In Russia, the national language is taught as a compulsory subject along with the regional language. It is only when the national business is conducted in the national language, the social elite of the country can develop a community of ideas, interests and ideals.

COMMON SCRIPT

Just as the adoption of national language will help the people in having a common medium of thought and expression, the adoption of one common script will be helpful in promoting inter-provincial unity.

The advantages of having one language and one script are obvious as they would be helpful in developing a common nationality. The spirit of youth and adventure, which animates a newly-born nation, is not to be seen in India. The thinking of the people is not dynamic and there is lack of appreciation of new responsibilities and obligations which has followed in the wake of political freedom. They are living in a state of flux and constant change, and unless they have the wisdom and courage to adjust themselves to new surroundings, the result is bound to be tragic.

The new challenge has to be met if they want to avoid a catastrophe. In order to do it, they have to give up their self-complacency and mental inertia and create a new interest in the problems of the day. In this respect, the responsibility of the teacher is the greatest.

REORIENTATION OF EDUCATION

If they want to lead a happy and sane life they have to begin with redefinition and reorientation of education. The medical education may be aristocratic. But it is today essentially democratic. The teachers, therefore, have to play a very important role in the new world. The responsibility of teachers is not merely to train minds and develop characters but also to develop a sense of social responsibility amongst students. But this last task has become more and more difficult due to many reasons, such as the saturation of the universities and lack of contact between the teachers and the taught.

LUCKNOW UNIVERSITY SILVER JUBILEE

The university is having a new birth because it was founded when we were slaves to foreign domination. We propose to celebrate the first silver jubilee in a Free India. It will not simply mark the completion of the first 25 years of the life of the university, it will also enable us to revitalise ourselves to take stock of the record of work that we have done, to consider how we are to improve and how we are to revitalise and equip ourselves fully to meet the new demands of the new situation. I think the Indian people now have the opportunity, after so many centuries, to reorder their lives in their own way and to become the architects of their own destiny. I do not think that it is proper for us to stagnate just like this and to carry on our routine work. I think it is high time that the universities of India readjusted themselves to the new situation, that they reordered their lives and not only gave a new tone and created new academic activities, but also started the teaching of new sciences and new subjects to meet the growing and expanding demands of the nation. In this task, I wish to enlist hearty sympathy of the people.

If the vice-chancellor has to perform his duties properly, if the university has to take its place in the new set up, it must be equipped with the requirements which the new situation demands. And we have many demands to make to that end.

GREAT VOLUME

The enrolment of the university has doubled itself during the last ten

years, but the buildings have not expanded in the same measure. The laboratory accommodation needs expansion; we need more equipment and better equipment in order that scientific research be properly conducted in the university. We find it very hard to admit a larger number of students to the various science classes and if we want to maintain discipline amongst the students we want a common room, where they can sit and not loiter about in the verandahs and be a nuisance to others.

For every little thing we have to go to Government. I know the country is passing through a deep economic crisis. I know that the financial and economic experts have asked Government to go slow with its various development schemes. But I would remind that in these days university education has a great value of its own. For the successful functioning of democracy, it is not only necessary that there should be mass education in the country, but it is also necessary that the universities should provide them with the right type of leaders, who may be able to render proper help and guidance to the people and for this university education has its own value.

In this age of science and technology, we cannot make any progress unless we develop scientific research. At the last meeting of the university court a resolution was passed calling upon the university authorities to make provision for the teaching of industrial chemistry. But for want of funds, we have not yet been able to fulfil their desire. There are so many other branches of science, that is agriculture, industry, wireless and engineering. In the same way if we look to subjects of arts, we specialise in sociology and we also propose to provide trained men for manning the various social services. We have got a course in our university which trains people for labour welfare and economic welfare. We also propose, provided we get the funds from Government and charitably disposed people to introduce a course of agricultural rural economics and rural welfare. But the conception of social welfare and social service has altered a good deal in the past decade. New problems have been thrown up by exigencies of the war, and it is now considered that for a proper definition of social service it is not at all sufficient that we render help to the needy and the distressed, but it is also necessary that we should try to enrich the normal life of the individual. For this, a specialised course of study and special training is absolutely necessary, and such a training can only be provided in a university. The Lucknow University is not merely a provincial university, but it is cosmopolitan, Indian and national, because the Government of India draw upon our personnel. There is no lack of talent in the Lucknow University. Though it is younger in years, I would like to submit that its youth is a recommendation at least in one sense that it is free from many encumbrances of the past to which the older universities are still undergoing.

I am sure that the Government of the province will come to our help and also, the Central Government which is now ready to help every strata of education from the junior basic stage up to the university education. I am also confident that we shall be able to get financial aid from other charitably disposed people, so that we may not have to depend on Government help for anything and everything. Such help will go a long way in helping us to solve so many difficulties with which we are faced.

Last year, this university approached the University Grants Commission with a modest request of recommending to the Government for making provision for the teaching of Russian and Chinese languages. But it is unfortunate that so far we have not been recipients of any grant. I propose to go ahead with making arrangements for the teaching of these two subjects. In the same way, I think, is absolutely necessary that we should have a school of international affairs, a school of archaeology to provide the basic material for the right and proper understanding and appreciation of our past record and achievements. No university will be worthy of the name if it does not develop science, if it does not develop new branches of learning and if it does not, at the same time, do its best to make others appreciate the rich treasures of India's past.

I do not want that there should be duplication. I want a co-ordinated scheme to work on after mutual consultations with the various universities of the province, because duplication will lead to waste of time, energy and money. But I would certainly insist on certain universities deciding about their own specialities in which they should specialise. I would like to point out that the University of Lucknow has specialised in experimental psychology, in sociology, in zoology, in botany, and in the world of letters and science our record has been such that any university will be proud of it. The material is there, the talent is there, and if we can get the money, the wherewithal, we can change this university in no time and bring it into line with other universities and enable it to perform its tasks which are demanded in this new set-up.

Every possible effort should be made to carry the university to the zenith of scientific research and literary perfection. The universities are a sacred trust, wherein are moulded the nation-builders and guides, and, therefore, it ought to be the endeavour of both the teachers and the taught to live up to that ideal.

The youth of the day have special privileges and responsibilities. They have to build and shape the new concept of the State—a State which ought to look after the prime needs of the people, food, clothing and shelter, and provide them with education. The youth alone could make it by working for new values of life, for a new social order, for a new culture which should not be the monopoly of a few but of all.

NEED FOR EXPERTS

For running the State of our concept, a large number of experts are required. Without them the new concept of democratic and positive State would never succeed. It is with this end in view that the Government has appointed a scientific manpower committee to recruit scientists and other experts.

These experts can come only from the universities and for that the university education has to be expanded. The Government of India should give more financial aid to the universities to undertake research work and help them out of financial bankruptcy that has made them dependent on the provincial Governments. The existing state of affairs wherein the university has to take government sanction for the smallest expenditure must end.

UNIVERSITY EDUCATION

University education is very essential for society and if it is not expanded fully, it is likely to have adverse repercussions on society. For an ideal university education there is the need of a higher status for the university teachers as also higher salaries, for without financial stability the teachers are not likely to do full justice to their work.

Apart from to the Government for larger government grants the university should also make an effort to increase their revenues and must launch drives for public subscriptions. I am going to make collection myself, and also going to ask the local bodies of Avadh to institute scholarship in the university.

University education in India is a privilege enjoyed by one student out of every 2,206, and therefore, the university student must realise his responsibilities. The students are also entitled to more privileges, for, while in other countries more than 40 per cent of the students enjoyed freeships and half-freeships, in Indian universities only 5 per cent of the students enjoys those concessions.

Half of the students coming to the universities are not able to support themselves with the result they have to undertake jobs to carry on their studies. It hampers the development of their faculties and personalities, and though they managed to pass examinations their potentialities for greater work were destroyed. "

WASTE OF TALENT

A graduate has better claims for appointments. I am pained to see that

the graduates were holding petty jobs only because they have to subsist. It is a criminal waste of country's talent, for graduates are far too few.

The university students who are going to be the nation-builders, have a great task ahead of them. They must inculcate self-discipline, self-reliance and self-control. They should strain their every nerve to understand the problems facing the country and to find their solutions. The students are brave and adventurous, but they require wisdom.

Only passing of the university examinations, is not the aim of student-ship. It is a mean ideal in itself and it does not behove the youth to develop such narrow tendencies. They have traditions of sacrifice and patriotism and they should uphold them.

I have immense faith the youth and I derive great inspiration from them. During this tenure of office, I would do my utmost to give all facilities and conveniences to the students, would understand their problems and consider them with sympathy but would never tolerate any misbehaviour on their part. The students ought to set high ideals and traditions.

ANCIENT LITERATURE

The world is at present passing through a spiritual crisis, and the present generation has to solve it. So those, who are not aware of the present conflict and do not feel it and strive to solve it are escapists and are dead as far as society is concerned. Tulsi Das's *Ramayana* is a unique work of literature. It, however, depicts a self-sufficient society and an ideal *Rama Rajya*, and does not help one to understand the present problems. For, it was written at a time when no such problem existed. *Gita* is more useful at the present time, since it was written in the period of crisis. It is a similar one through which the world is passing today. *Gita* can show a way out to the dissatisfied man and the man who is the real seeker of truth.

The problem before the world today is whether one accepts socialism or individualism or tries for a synthesis of the two. It was impossible to go back to the "golden past" and one had to march forward and accept socialism as inevitable, though socialism has at present its own failings.

*Indian Literature and Its Role**

What should be the yardstick of literature today? To answer this question one should know as to what is the relation between life and literature and what are the forces operating human life. Today the welfare of the people, defence, economic policy—all are determined by the State power. Whatever might be the situation earlier, the ruler or the State power is the decisive factor today. All other disciplines are confined to the politics of State. We can no longer remain aloof from politics. I never mean group politics when I say this. What I mean is the politics at higher level, which is influenced by the life of the common man which provides it strength. No thinker nor any literature can remain unaffected by the stream of politics. Can anybody deny the crisis that we are facing in our social life or whatever disorders there are? Should we not find out its remedy?

The State policy is bound to change if the economic policy changes. In the 19th century, those who were well off used to think that progress could be achieved through science. But the belief in it is shaken today. People have begun to condemn science. But the fact is that with the progress of science the change in the economic policy has not taken place as it should have been. This fact is at the root of every crisis. First the *laissez faire* policy was adopted in the economic field with a view to providing freedom to develop. But it was gradually realised that the entire economic field had gone under the control of a few individuals with scientific and technological know-how, while the rest of the poor masses became powerless and helpless. In our society today, there is immense inequality. Almost all economists, in some way or the other, have accepted the principle of planning. The struggle in the economic sphere has its reflection in cultural life. All economic and cultural problems are interlinked with today's power politics. How can a litterateur turn back his face to all-comprehensive struggle, which is unbalanced and uneven? He will have to meet the challenge, and fight this struggle. It is everyone's duty to restore equilibrium

*Extracts from the speech of Acharya Narendra Deva delivered on the occasion of Golden Jubilee of Kashi Nagari Pracharni Sabha, Varanasi.

and equality in society. The responsibility of the litterateur in the literary sphere is paramount.

One should first try to understand both the psychology of an individual as well as of the people in order to understand the relations between literature and society. Why should one who is leading a lonely life need human feelings? For, one cannot otherwise inspire love and respect. And literature is ultimately the expression of human feelings.

The other aspect of literature is the result of individual endeavour. Here, the importance of an individual becomes clear. From the beginning, there have been two trends of thoughts in the world. For some, individual is for society and, for others, society is for the individual. But, in fact, there should be a balance between these two thoughts. The welfare of humanity is possible only through striking this balance. Without establishing social rules, no individual can prosper; nor can any society grow by destroying the importance of an individual. Can society grow by destroying persons like Rama, Krishna, Gandhi, Plato, Newton, and Vivekananda? People, gifted and talented, are needed for the growth of society. It is, however, natural that some are physically strong and some intellectual giants and geniuses. Both deserve to be respected. A healthy social reconstruction can be achieved by combining these two forces. Such an environment should be created. Both the forces have equal opportunity to grow. In any circumstances, there should be no suppression of freedom of expression of one's individuality. Otherwise, society will be destroyed. Literature is another name of conscious expression of individuality.

A new thought blossoms forth only when there is a conflict between different thoughts. Then alone the truth is discovered. Man has gradually scored over Nature. So also science has grown. People can take benefit from these thoughts and sciences only when the litterateurs and socialists work with the spirit of human welfare. If there is no feeling of compassion or brotherhood behind their activities, there can be no other result than destruction. Today human development has reached a stage from where it can go still higher. Man should have the sense of judgement as to how far his endeavours in life, in the course of his attaining individuality, have made society more civilised and cultured. Our attempt should be to increase the number of such people and we can create the more cultured mankind. There should, therefore, be suitable opportunity for an individual to express one's genius.

The question that arises here is how, as long as the nation is poor, as long as it suffers from the scourge of inequality, can there be any possibility of human reconstruction? Science which man has developed can be used to end inequality. We can usher in an era of equality and prosperity through proper planning of knowledge and industrial development. Equality does

not mean that all people will be equal or they will be indetical. Such equality is nothing but disastrous. Equality means ensuring equal and favourable opportunity to every individual to develop his personality to the maximum suited to his physical, intellectual and mental capacities. There should be no obstruction in his way to attain an integrated development. There should be such an all-round environment that even a criminal gets an opportunity to reform himself. We cannot make all equally, genius. But we can give impetus to growth of these talents which are being neglected now. We can make millions of people cultured by removing the bane of poverty. This will help in our nation-building activities.

No thinker can ignore society's gradual development. Human society has constantly evolved and progressed since the early times. In the course of its progress new spiritual values have been established from time to time. In the East, human development has its own tradition. But whatever the West has done cannot be ignored. No conscious thinker can deny the contribution of the West. Whatever struggles the people of the West have achieved in the scientific field in spheres of writing, speaking and organisation to secure freedom is unique in the history of mankind. All this has created new awareness among the people and established new values, which no Indian litterateur can ignore or remain without being influenced.

How much mankind has progressed since the beginning can be seen from the Charter of the United Nations Organisation in which an assurance for the protection of fundamental' rights of the world community has been given. Perhaps it was not possible before. It was for the first time that an international dimension of the organisation as also of the progress of mankind has been established. This is a different matter that there are still several difficulties in giving shape to the ideal of internationalism. There is still a threat of internationalism But this does not lessen the historical importance of the Declaration of the UNO. Human society is one all over the world. By announcement of this Declaration by the nations of the world, the beginning of a new era has been heralded. The people can no longer shelve it.

Behind the UN Declaration there is a feeling of unity of the world community and, as a matter of fact, this has become the source of inspiration to all new and rising nations. These rising forces are the divine values of our age, though there are still the forces of demon ranged against them. But the victory of the divine forces is indispensable. Our literature should become the mirror of these divine forces. The literature of today is an enemy of class distinction, communal and religious sectarianism. The flame of a new urge for establishing world peace has been kindled in the litterateur. He has vision of a new social order. He is active in giving shape to new humanity in individual and social life. Who can deny that the

dream of reconstructing a new human society was possible due to scientific and physical struggles in the West? Should we remain as obscurantist as two hundred years ago even after adopting scientific achievements of the West?

We have to determine new values for a new society. Our country has the richest culture. It has all the basic elements by which we can bring about a new era and a new social order, the most vital of them being the element of establishing unity among different life styles and excellence in every field of human life. There are under this vast Indian civilisation several different small cultures. Similarly, there are also different varieties of religions such as, *Sanatana Dharma*, *Arya Samaj*, *Jainism* and *Buddhism*. There is difference in the style of worship; so also in festivals, celebrations and rituals. But, notwithstanding these distinctions, there are certain important elements which have unique capacities to safeguard unity and equality. There is unity in diversity, and it has been a source of inspiration to us from the beginning. We have made so many experiments in our life that we can benefit from the Western experiment. In no way it will harm us. We can easily adopt the highest values of the West in our culture. By exchanging knowledge and thoughts we can enrich and strengthen our civilisation. We should not keep our doors closed to such exchange of ideas.

There is another characteristic of Indian culture that it can establish a moral order. It is necessary in some way or the other for successful and healthy regulation of human life and development. The belief in human endeavour in itself is so important that it always leads to the highest objectives of life and we find its expression in the division of Indian culture into four stages, namely, religion, economy, *karma* and salvation. Salvation is the highest stage of human life. By *moksha* we mean that man is freed from intellectual and spiritual bonds. One cannot attain *moksha* without meditation. Meditation provides the method of regulation of mind and physique. There is unanimity on this aspect of life among different communities, whether atheists or believers. To move on to *moksha* without expecting any returns for one's actions or work and by doing services for its own sake is the essence of Indian culture.

We should not forget that Indian culture is the outcome of the synthesis of several different religions. We must give up the tendency of ignoring Buddhism or Jainism, thinking that they are atheists. European culture, Greek arts and literature are founded on principles. There is the impact of Indian culture on Greece and Roman civilisations. This can be seen in the discovery that we tried to imbibe our political and economic ideals from them while propagating our ideas in the Asian continent. This is the uniqueness of our Indian culture; our heritage is priceless. If we want to become true inheritors of this treasure, we should strive hard to keep it

alive with our determination and sincerity.

We should be attached to our past; we should have respect for it. But we should not be superstitious. Those who remain confined within narrow “isms” are not fit to be the citizens of the world today. Our culture seeks to spread the message of purity in behaviour. It is most necessary that the people of a country should inculcate decency in mutual behaviour in keeping with their philosophy and literature. Taking care of one self as well as of others is the basis of all cultures. Man was impelled to form organisations through mutual cooperation. Food and marriage are essential for human existence. It is, therefore, necessary to establish contact with each other. That is how society is formed. A society is bound to meet its doom unless people are concerned with one another. Hence, it is said:

This is the essence of socialability and humanity. If we give up looking into others' mistakes, we can discover them in ourselves. We may correct ourselves. In this way the whole society may improve. In our culture, we have given emphasis on introspection.

In this background of Indian culture, we can determine the role of different literatures. Firm determination and large-heartedness alone can help raise a new society. After the emergence of a new society, a new India will be re-born.

GANDHI AND NEHRU

*As I see Gandhi **

Gandhiji had built up a little prestige for himself in South Africa. Actually he regarded South Africa as his laboratory, where his first experiment was carried out with great success. He organised illiterate Indians who had settled in South Africa as indentured labourers. They were illiterate; they were disorganised. He organised them and with their help carried on a non-violent struggle with a large measure of success. When he returned to India, he had not decided his future course of action. He studied the political situation before coming to certain conclusions, on the advice of Gokhale. Therefore, although he attended the sessions of the Indian National Congress every year, he never spoke on any political question. He talked only about South Africa, as regards which he considered himself an expert, but did not intermingle with Indian politics for many years. In the meantime he carried out local struggles on the agrarian issue with great success.

Now, it so happened that there were political leaders before the advent of Gandhiji, but they had no faith in the masses. They had no use for the masses. They regarded the people as an inert mass. They were wedded to constitutional methods of agitation. The Indian leadership then had great faith in the good intentions of the British. Some of them regarded India's relationship with Britain as providential. Gokhale is also included in this list. For many years they believed in Britain's promise that when Indians had demonstrated their capacity to govern themselves, Britain would willingly retire from India and leave her free to manage her own affairs. That was the faith which guided them. They did not think of violence because they had faith in the good intentions of the British people.

There were, however, others outside the Indian National Congress—the terrorists, the revolutionaries—who believed in violence. They

did not believe in the constitutional methods of agitation. They had not the least faith in the noble intentions of the British. They thought that no Government would rule others for the benefit of the governed. They govern others for their own benefit, for their selfish ends. The Revolutionaries, therefore, hatched conspiracies, they believed in murders. They thought that India could get freedom only with the help of the Indian army. They wanted the Indian army to revolt. They had faith in the Indian youth. They had no faith in the masses. The masses never came into their picture. They believed in a violent struggle to liberate India from British imperialism.

That was the situation when Gandhiji returned to India from South Africa. He studied the Indian situation. There was a wide gulf between Gandhiji and the English-educated Indian community. The English-educated community had no faith in Gandhiji's leadership. They looked upon him with scepticism and prejudice. Gandhiji was essentially a man of the masses. We should not forget this fact. He lived and dressed like any other ordinary Indian peasant. He was more akin to them, nearer to them than the English-educated classes. He was not a sophisticated person. He was not a learned man. He was not wedded to any philosophical system or ism. Therefore, he could think independently of these isms or the systems of philosophy. He was not even versed in the ancient lore of India. But he was deeply versed in the innermost spirit of the Indian people. His fingers were on the pulse of the people of India. He moved freely amongst them. He knew their ups and downs. He knew them intimately. Therefore, he was the only person who had faith in the Indian masses.

Gandhiji had no faith in the constitutional method of agitation. He used constitutional methods as a training ground for preparing the people for a non-violent struggle. If an objective could be achieved by negotiations, by making representations, by agitation, by educating the people, he would do that. If these methods failed, if negotiations broke down, he would resort to non-violent struggle. Now, a non-violent struggle cannot be carried on in secrecy, because the masses, large numbers, will be involved in it. Therefore, Gandhi had devised his new methods which he had successfully carried out in South Africa. The South African example demonstrated clearly that the illiterate, disorganised Indians could be organised into a powerful force to fight for their rights against the colour prejudice in South Africa. It brought a large measure of success. He had that faith. But the educated community lacked that faith. They had no trust in the masses. They could not make any use of them. A revolutionary cannot make use of a villager.

During the period of the first World War, the British could not divide the Hindus from the Muslims. It so happened that we presented a united front on the constitutional claim. The two big organisations of the country, the Indian National Congress and the Muslim League, united to present a demand known as the Congress-League scheme. The policy of divide and rule could not be carried out. The leaders were thus working on the constitutional plane. The terrorists were also working for the independence of the country and made a pact with the German Government. They sent their emissaries to the army. There was mass discontent as a result of hardship due to war and there was disaffection in the army also. These terrorist emissaries who went into the Indian army incited them to revolt. There were many conspiracy cases held and many people were hanged, and many were given transportation for life. The terrorists however failed.

It was at this stage that Gandhiji took to politics. Hindus and Muslims presented a joint demand to the Britishers. It had some effect. Britain could not completely ignore it. They had to yield and to give a certain measure of reform. It was at the end of the war, in 1918, when Gandhiji entered the arena of politics in India. Before that he was studying the situation. He took up local agrarian issues and he did succeed. At Ahmedabad he went on a fast and the demands of the workers were conceded by the mill-owners out of regard for the sacred life of Gandhiji. In this manner the efficacy of the new weapon which he wanted to use had been established successfully in certain local areas, first in South Africa, then in Champaran in 1917, and in 1918 in Kaira and they all added to his prestige immensely. With this experience he came at a moment when the people were ripe for something new. That was true of all Asian countries.

It was in 1918, 1919 and 1920, that in all the Asian countries—subject countries—large-scale constitutional movements for freedom started. In 1918, Gandhiji gave the call in the name of the Congress. He called it *satyagraha*. It had a tremendous response. People were on the move. They had been disturbed, they were in search of a new leader, and Gandhiji was there to deliver the goods. In China, we find a fresh struggle starting in 1919. We find in Egypt the Wafd movement coming to the forefront as representative of the Egyptian people demanding freedom. In the same year in Iran also a new struggle starts; in 1921 it gets its fulfilment and Reza Shah Pahlavi comes into power. As a sequel to the first World War, in all these countries fresh struggles for freedom were initiated simultaneously. Therefore, the time was certainly ripe for a new movement. People wanted something to give them a new hope, a new faith.

Gandhiji had succeeded in using his weapon of *satyagraha* with a certain degree of success in certain localities. He was welcomed by the people. The educated community did not at first respond. The common people responded. There was, however, an outbreak of violence and Gandhiji had to cry halt. There was thus a setback. But then where the leaders of educated classes saw the efficacy of the new weapon, they agreed to go with Gandhiji. When he started the non-cooperation movement in 1920, they at first argued with him. They were enamoured of seats in the Legislature, but when a very large body of delegates went to the side of Gandhiji, they had to follow. Otherwise their political careers would have come to an end.

Gandhiji always found it difficult to convince the English-educated Indian leaders of political thought. They were not at first convinced by the line of action which he wanted to chalk out for them, but he had greater success with the Indian masses because he was essentially a man of the masses. You can use the strength of the masses only in a non-violent struggle. He did succeed in exploiting the enthusiasm evoked in the masses for the objectives which were so dear to his heart. Therefore, I think it was the propitious and favourable situation that made the people respond to Gandhiji's call. The educated community was sceptical but wanted to give a trial to his new method. They were not men of faith, but the masses had faith in him and followed him, because the masses thought he was one of them.

*Favourite of Fortune**

I first met Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, if I remember alright, in 1916 or 1917, when he was Secretary of the Provincial Home Rule League. I was then Secretary of the Faizabad branch. Panditji came to Faizabad in connection with the non-cooperation movement. The peasant movement was in full swing in the Akbarpur and Tanda *tehsils*, and the Gohanna *maidan* in Akbarpur had become famous for its historic meetings. I had then given up practice at the Bar. Panditji had been profoundly influenced by the cooperation movement. It would not be an exaggeration to say that he was experiencing a spiritual re-birth. This had completely changed his mode of living, for Panditji reacts intensely to environmental changes. But outwardly also the change was marked: life at the *Anand Bhavan* was completely transformed. All foreign cloth was burned in a gigantic bonfire. Panditji gave up smoking and betelnut, and cardamoms were passed round to guests instead of the cigarettes from the bag that he always carried with him. He lived with an austere simplicity, visiting and staying with just anybody, however lowly or insignificant. Under Gandhiji's influence he had started reading the *Gita*; the children of the family were already reading Sanskrit.

It was a special feature of Pandit Motilal Nehru's character that he would devote himself whole-heartedly to any cause that he took up. So also, when he associated himself with the non-cooperation movement, he threw himself into it heart and soul. Not only did he give up his flourishing practice, but he also completely recast his life in a new mould. It is often said that he joined the movement on account of Jawaharlal, but this is only partly true. He was not sentimentally inclined; he would only accept what appealed to his reason and detached judgement. But it is true that he was deeply attached to his family and particularly to Jawaharlal, and so the fact that Jawaharlal had joined the movement did affect him. In spite of all this, it must be admitted that his decision was made independently. He was

• Nehru Birthday Book, 14 November 1949.

very much affected by happenings in the Punjab, and Gandhiji's unique personality had also made a deep impression. Pandit Motilal Nehru joined the movement rather earlier than the other leaders of the "old guard". C.R. Das could only make a final decision at Nagpur Congress (1920). The main problem then agitating his mind was as to where the money would come from for public work if he gave up his practice. I recall, how during the Congress Session at Nagpur, a number of Bengali workers came to him in my presence and urged him to lead the movement. He placed his dilemma before them, and after some discussion, and an assurance by the young band of workers that money would not be lacking, he made his final choice and joined the movement.

Jawaharlal's whole family participated in the movement. There was no argument or friction in the family as had happened in many other cases. It is not easy to devote oneself to political work in opposition to one's parents, wife and family; but very few are fortunate in securing their blessings and active cooperation. Jawaharlal was able to devote himself completely to politics, and he was a changed man. Had he stayed in the profession, he would at the most have become a moderately successful barrister. He did not practise very long, but even with his father's support he had not made a very great name in the profession, and it is difficult to say, whether he could ever have attained the position at the Bar, which his father held. He was very much like other average sons of very well-to-do parents and his life also was true to pattern. He had a very sheltered childhood, receiving much affection, and being sent abroad in childhood, where he acquired foreign ways of living, and was kept completely aloof from politics. In those days, under the influence of Shri Shyamji Krishna Verma, a number of Indian students had turned revolutionary. They had set up a centre called "Swaraj House"; Savarkar and Hardayal were notable products of this centre. Hardayal renounced his government scholarship and returned to India to take part in politics. Jawaharlalji, however, was not affected by this group, though he was influenced by Lokamanya Tilak who received a sentence of six years' hard labour in 1908. The work of the Fabian Society also influenced him. But these influences were not such as to change Jawaharlal's life or ideas fundamentally. On return to India he attended sessions of the Indian National Congress like other considerably after the secession of the Tilak group. It was only from 1916, when the two groups coalesced again, that the Congress began to grow in power and influence. Jawaharlalji took considerable interest in the Home Rule League, but this also did not fundamentally affect his life. It was the advent of Gandhiji on the scene and the impact of his personality and movement, that transformed Jawaharlalji. I know many who were deeply affected. I recall one instance in particular—a man who was also given to gambling and drink, and a

dissipated son of a rich family, a do-nothing, a spendthrift wasting inherited wealth and innocent of politics—such a man was transformed as if by magic : he joined the non-cooperation movement giving up all his old habits, and he has never touched liquor from that day. The transformation in Jawaharlalji was of a fundamental character, as he readily conceded himself. He confessed to me during our incarceration in Ahmednagar Fort that “prison had made a man of him.” This is completely true, for if participation in the non-cooperation movement had not so profoundly affected his life his personality would not have attained the growth and stature that it did, and he would have been very far from the international personality that he is today. A visit to Europe in 1925-27 and frequent imprisonments gave him an opportunity for reading and thinking, an opportunity that he turned to good use.

* * *

Jawaharlal writes well and at great speed. I remember an incident in 1936 when the All-India Parliamentary Board was entrusted with the task of drafting an election programme. I was also a member of the Board. The Board met in Bombay. I was very disappointed with the draft because it lacked vigour and appeal, but with a few minor changes it went through. That night I met Jawaharlalji and urged him to prepare another draft. He promised to try. The Working Committee and the All-India Congress Committee were to have considered and passed the draft finally next morning. I met Jawaharlal again in the morning and found that he had a new draft ready. I learnt that he had stayed up till 3 o'clock in the morning writing it. I was delighted with the new version which was finally adopted by the All-India Congress Committee. Draft resolutions for the Working Committee were generally prepared by Mahatma Gandhi and Jawaharlalji, only occasional drafts being entrusted to other members. Alteration in their drafts were rare.

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When Jawaharlalji came to Faizabad in the beginning of 1921 he spoke to me about the Kashi Vidyapith and indicated the desire of the Governing Body that I should take up teaching work there. The Vidyapith had been founded by Mahatmaji on February 10, 1921. The Governing Body had already been formed and my name had been included therein; though at that time there had been no talk of my joining the teaching staff. But Jawaharlalji thought they wanted me. The idea appealed to me, and at his instance I wrote to Shri Shiwprasad Gupta indicating my willingness to come. He called me there, and I started teaching shortly after. But for Jawaharlalji's interest the question of my going to the Vidyapith would never have arisen, and I have often wondered what the pattern of my life would have been in that case. Up to that time my acquaintance with him

had been only slight. But association with the Vidyapith led to closer contacts, and, when he returned from Europe in 1927, similarity of ideas led to more intimate friendship.

In 1922 the Congress had split into two over the question of Council entry. Those who did not want any changes in the non-cooperation programme were called "no-changers"; these were led by Shri Rajagopalachari. In the other group were Pandit Motilal and C. R. Das, who favoured entry into the legislatures. Mahatmaji was then in prison. The controversy grew hot. Jawaharlalji kept aloof; at heart he was a no-changer, but he did not wish to make a quarrel over this issue. In those days resignations from the Working Committee were frequent. At last the Swaraj Party was formed and elections were fought, but Jawaharlalji stood apart from both. The national movement began to decline and Hindu-Muslim riots became the order of the day. Jawaharlalji and his wife went away to Europe. In this voluntary exile, he made a deep study of affairs and returned to the country a Socialist. His first political act on return, was to sponsor a resolution to change the goal of the Congress to full independence. Mahatmaji, however, was not very pleased with this. Jawaharlalji founded the "Independence of India League", of which I became a member. Since his return from Europe, Jawaharlalji's disagreement with his father had increased: there were frequent hot discussions at the table. In 1928, in the Calcutta session of the Congress, there was further argument about the creed of the Congress. During this session I was once walking with Jawaharlalji and Shri Sri Prakasa; a little ahead of us was Shri Subhas Bose with a few companions. Noticing him Jawaharlalji commented appreciatively on Subhas Bose's treating all his colleagues on a basis of equality and invariably walking to meetings with them rather than taking a car by himself. Jawaharlalji held it out to us as an example to follow. In those days his mind was deeply disturbed by economic and social problems, and he was unhappy on account of the divergence of his views with Gandhiji and his father. If the Congress had not adopted complete independence as its objective at the Lahore Session in the following year, and if the new movement had not been started immediately thereafter and continued for four or five years, I think Jawaharlalji's life would have taken a different path: he would have become the leader of a party within the Congress.

This is, of course, a hypothetical proposition, but I base it on my knowledge of his attitude in 1928-29. The impossibility of agreement on fundamental issues with the Congress High Command would have left him with no alternative. But such a contingency did not arise. Mahatmaji knew Jawaharlalji's value, and Jawaharlalji also realised that it was Gandhi's era and that nothing could be achieved without his participation.

That was why he would fight hard for every concession and then rest content with whatever he was able to secure. Sometimes he would argue obstinately and even grow irritated. Gandhiji would generally listen to him with complete equanimity and ignore his bitter remarks. Once in a while, however, Gandhiji would clearly enunciate his own views and quietly indicate that such and such a thing would not be. In 1942, when Gandhiji and Jawaharlal held divergent views on *satyagraha*, he had once gone to Sevagram to talk things out with Mahatmaji. I was then in Sevagram. Jawaharlalji told me in conversation that he regarded Gandhiji himself as a vital factor of the "objective situation". What he thought or was going to do was a most important consideration. When he realised that Gandhiji was adamant, he contented himself with securing clarification of certain issues and gave his assent. Gandhiji had asked me one day, before Jawaharlal's arrival, as to how Jawaharlal was going to react. I had answered that in my opinion if *satyagraha* was decided on Jawaharlalji would not stay out. That was Gandhiji's impression also, but he was concerned to secure Jawaharlal's agreement, and was not satisfied till he had secured it. But Jawaharlalji's intellect never really approved of the decision. During our imprisonment in Ahmednagar Fort he confessed more than once that in his view the step had been hurriedly taken, and that it might have been possible to bring Britain to terms with the help of American pressure.

In 1929 Jawaharlal Nehru became President of the Congress. At the Lahore session Motilalji surrendered his seat to Jawaharlal, and said that the son would accomplish what the father had failed to achieve. It was an unforgettable moment. There had been few cases of great leaders being surpassed by greater sons; the general tendency is for the sons of great men to turn out incompetents, and our own country can provide many instances of the latter. But Motilalji's prediction came true. At that time Jawaharlalji's mother was in a sort of ecstasy, which was quite natural considering that the Presidentship of the Congress was the highest honour that the nation could confer. Things may have changed today and this office may have lost its glamour or importance now, but before the achievement of independence it was not so. Jawaharlalji was indeed the favourite of fortune: it was under his guidance that the independence pledge was adopted. The night after the resolution was carried there was great rejoicing in the delegates' camp, and Jawaharlalji danced with the delegates. Pandit Motilal Nehru and Jawaharlal had great influence with the Punjabis: this dated from the days of Martial Law when Motilalji had worked in their midst. Jawaharlal was the hero of Punjab's youth and had a staggering reception.

In 1942, we were arrested together and confined in Ahmednagar Fort.

We were together there, and when the Ahmednagar prison camp was disbanded, I was sent with him to the Bareilly Central Jail; hence we were transferred together to Almora, and finally released together. In prison, association is forced and continuous: no one can hide his faults. I had the opportunity of studying Jawaharlalji very carefully during three years of incarceration. He had a very severely regulated life. He took regular exercise, bathed before breakfast, and then immediately settled down to work. He went on till three in the afternoon with a short break for lunch; after three he occasionally took a short nap. In the evening he played badminton or took a brisk walk. From 9 to 11 in the evening he was again at work, reading and taking notes. He received many Indian and foreign papers and was always getting new books. He was devoted to his friends and companions and would nurse a sick comrade with the most scrupulous attention. Once Dr. Mahmood fell considerably ill. Jawaharlalji would sit by him till midnight and thereafter come to see him at regular intervals. During the first year I too had a bad time, getting severe attacks of asthma every three weeks. I grew very weak and everyone was worried. Jawaharlalji persuaded me to try halibut liver oil which did me much good, and my attacks ceased. The mess was managed by us in turns; Jawaharlalji used to teach other prisoners how to prepare eggs and make tea. We used to celebrate our national festivals: the dining room would be decorated, with Jawaharlalji taking the lead. There was a large big courtyard where we were confined; this became Jawaharlal's garden patch and he beautified it with a variety of flowers. He has a passion for order and cleanliness. This order and regularity can be observed even outside prison, though here he rarely has time for play and not much time for reading—this last lack, however, he used to make up by voracious reading in trains. Under conditions of continuous association there are bound to be occasional bickerings and displays of temper. We too occasionally had discussions which would sometimes become heated and even lead to quarrels; these, however, did not last long. In Ahmednagar Fort we had a coffee club in which political discussions often took place and sometimes people told stories and anecdotes. Dr. Mahmood was a most interesting *reconteur*. Amongst political workers discussions on principle often lead to bitterness and a permanent breach: politics is a game of set opinions, and few pay attention to contrary opinions even when there is close reasoning adduced in support. Jawaharlalji, however, was an exception; he always made an effort to see the other man's point of view and was open to persuasion. There are two sides to every question, and an element of truth in each side, but those who see both sides often find it difficult to arrive at a decision. Such is the case with Jawaharlal, and he often finds it difficult to make up his mind finally on a particular issue. This, however, does not mean that he

has no definite opinions on any subject; he has and he can defend his opinions with great tenacity of argument. Only, there is a number of question on which there has been no need for him to make a final choice.

Jawaharlal derives strength from the people. He likes vast crowds. Personal popularity leads him to believe that the people are satisfied with his administration: this conclusion, however, is not always justified. He is particularly influenced by his immediate circle: as the people in this circle have also had a European education he finds greater affinities with them than with others. But in the last fifteen years the culture of ancient India has exerted a deep influence on him. The late R.S. Pandit had first roused his interest in this direction, and it has since steadily increased. He said to me once: "If I were convinced that the people of India were worthless I would not bother to work for them. But my country's history tells me that India has been a great country. She has undergone vast historical changes and produced many great men." Jawaharlalji expects little from the middle class which he regards as decadent. But, in the common people he sees life and vitality; it is on them that he founds his hopes for the future of his country.

*Jawaharlal: The Socialist**

Although Jawaharlal felt a vague attraction towards Fabian Socialism while he was a student in England, yet it is definite that he came decisively under the impact of socialism during his sojourn in Europe in 1926–27. Many intellectuals and sensitive souls were deeply impressed with the Russian Revolution, and much more with the Soviet experiment for re-organisation of the economic foundations of society in order to secure the welfare of the masses and elimination of all forms of exploitation. They had also come to the conclusion that mere political freedom was of no use to the masses unless it was accompanied by fundamental change in the existing economic and social structure. The problem of social injustice, exploitation, poverty and misery tormented them, and in colonial countries where mass awakening was phenomenal in the period after the first world war, intelligent men everywhere put themselves the question whether mere political independence would be able to solve these problems. The Russian experiment had shown the way and every keen mind in India began to redefine *Swaraj* in terms of the masses and to put a social content into the political concept of freedom.

On his return from Europe in 1927, Jawaharlal began to give a new orientation to Congress policy. He was a Tilakite in his student days and was a staunch nationalist. But his socialist outlook now made him see things in a new light. For him the question of questions was what should be the tangible shape of *Swaraj* for which we fought and what should be the method of achieving that objective.

Marxism had given him a scientific method of studying concrete problems. The application of such methods enables one to make a penetrating analysis of men and events because one sees them not in isolation but in their relation to the social milieu from which they have issued. Such an analysis discovers the unity that finds men and events and conditions them reciprocally. This also enables one to follow every event

* *Nehru-Your Neighbour*; Edited by P. D. Tandon, The SIGNET PRESS—Calcutta; 1961

and every individual in relation to the epoch and to study in this framework the role which is proper to the individual and its significance in the present. Jawaharlal tries to apply this method to our problems and is able to give us as synthetic a picture as possible. He is also able to reveal tendencies of objective value. He tries to understand the unseen historic forces of which individuals are only transient symbols. He is thus not deceived by external appearances, but he dives deep below the surface and tries to understand the working of forces which lie hidden from our view.

A fundamental question that needed a clear enunciation was whether our national objective was at best only the achievement of dominion status or that of complete independence.

The question was never clearly answered and there was always a danger, nay, a certainty, that a policy of compromise and settlement with foreign imperialism would be followed. It was, therefore, necessary to raise this fundamental issue of our political goal so that politics of compromise and capitulation should come to an end and the path should be made clear for a programme of revolutionary action. The question had been raised for the first time by the Extremist party under the leadership of *Lokmanya* Tilak in the days of the *Swadeshi* movement as early as 1906 and sporadic efforts continued to be made thereafter from time to time but without success. Jawaharlal raised the issue in 1927 at the Madras session of the Congress and succeeded in getting a resolution passed for complete independence without opposition, although the old creed was still retained. However, Mahatma Gandhi, who did not attend the Congress that year, did not like the resolution. Besides, the position was not quite satisfactory so long as the creed was not altered. It was, therefore, thought necessary to do some spade-work in the country through some new organisation before the Congress could be expected to accept the new creed. It was for this reason that Jawaharlal founded the 'Independence for India League' in 1928 in collaboration with others. It is noteworthy that the object of the League was not only achievement of complete independence for India but also reconstruction of Indian society on the basis of social and economic equality. The question of the Congress creed was again taken up to the Calcutta session in 1928, and after much debate, a decision was put off by another year. Next year at Lahore the Congress irrevocably pledged itself to complete independence.

It should be clearly understood that while advocating this political objective Jawaharlal never wanted India to lead a life of isolation. In the first place the modern age is one of inter-dependence, and being a socialist he could not be guilty of narrow nationalism. As a matter of fact the goal of dominion status if realised would prevent India from participating directly in the wide international life of the world, as it would bind it to the political

and economic system of which England is the representative. We are alien to the members of the British Commonwealth in race, religion and language. The system of political and economic thought, which the Commonwealth stands for, is also alien to us. India, with its hoary civilisation and its vast resources in men and material, would be tied down to the chariot-wheel of Great Britain and would not have the freedom to play her proper role in Asia. India is an Asiatic Power and her proper place would be primarily in federation of Asiatic peoples.

Jawaharlal took prominent interest in class organisations. He was elected president of the All-India Trade Union Congress in 1929 and it has been his constant endeavour to make the Congress interest itself in the economic struggles of the workers. He tried to bring economic questions to the forefront. The resolution on fundamental rights passed at the Karachi Congress in 1931 was his contribution. His activities brought about a general radicalisation of political thought in the country. He also insisted on the adoption of a militant programme by the Congress. He was the first to draw the country's attention to the war danger and he prepared the country for resistance to an imperialist war. He advocated the cause of the peoples of the Indian States. He brought India more and more into the international field and by his internationalism secured the support of the progressive thought of the world for the Indian cause. He induced the Congress to take keen interest in international affairs and the resolutions passed from time to time on international questions were his handiwork. He also slowly evolved a foreign policy for unofficial India as represented by the Congress.

There is no doubt that the personality of Gandhiji and the mass movement initiated by the Congress under his leadership attracted wide attention abroad and created interest in Indian affairs but it is also true that if the Congress had not under Jawaharlal's inspiration evinced an interest in world affairs and had not expressed its keen desire to ally itself with the progressive forces of the world, the world would not have shown that abiding and deep interest which it has shown. Progressives everywhere were interested in Gandhiji's novel experiment and supported India's claim for independence, but they regarded Gandhiji as essentially a nationalist while, to them, Jawaharlal was a socialist and an internationalist. It was the appreciation of the fact that young India, as represented by Jawaharlal, did not believe in the policy of isolationism, but was eager to play its part in an international organisation, that was mainly responsible for the world's keen interest in Indian affairs. There is no gainsaying the fact that this is the outstanding contribution of Jawaharlal.

The fact that he has today become an international figure^{*} is symbolic of the realisation that he has won international recognition for India. The fact

that he is an idol of the Indian masses is symbolic of the Congress having won the affection and loyalty of the masses. For, we must not forget that Jawaharlal's life-activities are indissolubly bound up with the Congress and that he has completely identified himself with it. There had been occasions when he vitally differed from certain policies and decisions of the Congress, but when once a decision was taken, he gave his whole-hearted support to it. Typical of his attitude was his saying that "the Congress can do no wrong", when in spite of his opposition, the Congress in 1937 decided in favour of office acceptance.

By this process of identification he has powerfully influenced the Congress and given it his own unmistakable impress. Without giving his adherence to any socialist group he easily became a spearhead of broad revolutionary and socialist forces in the country.

This is why he is adored by the youth of India. His forceful and charming personality, his spirit of adventure, his vitality and vigour attract youth everywhere. This is also the secret of his immense popularity with the Punjab masses who are sturdy and virile and love strength, power and greatness. The Punjab is politically backward and yet the people of the Punjab are mad after him. I can explain this phenomenon on no other ground than that he is a vital figure in Indian politics that loves adventure, admires courage, self-sacrifice and energetic action.

Jawaharlal's principal work has been to bring the Indian national movement in line with modern trends and to interlink it, if possible, with the international movement for democracy and socialism. It is obvious that the Congress being a multi-class organisation, cannot be an instrument for establishing a socialist state. But in the present world context, under the impact of powerful forces, it can be given a new orientation and as a matter of fact it must allow itself to come increasingly under the influence of socialist thought, if it wants to remain true to its goal of complete independence.

I think it would be wrong to appraise Jawaharlal's activities as those of an individual who is working for the establishment of a socialist state and on this ground to criticise him adversely. Though he is a professed socialist, his activities are largely guided by ideals of democracy and economic betterment of the masses. He is not wedded to any particular 'ism' nor is he temperamentally fit to be the leader of a group. He believes in some of the fundamental principles of scientific socialism, yet he is not prepared to swear by everything taught by Marx and Lenin. He does not subscribe to any rigid ideology. He considers himself free to examine the claims of every system of ideas which professes to serve the social purpose, and he is always revising his ideas in the light of new experiences gained. He knows that objective situations are more powerful than theories. The history of the

last twenty-five years has taught him that materialism is still a vital force and that every war gives an impetus to it even in unexpected quarters. He is impatient with those who mouth revolutionary phraseology in season out of season, and who always harp on the theme that the country is in the throes of revolution. He would not sacrifice the immediate possibility for a doubtful future. Besides, his first flush of love for socialism has certainly received a check in recent years. It seems that recent world events have made him sober and cautious and the result is that he does not show that burning zeal of a young crusader which was visible in 1936-38.

He is thus not a sectarian. He is a man of faith, but his faith is of a secular character and not supernatural. He has a scientific outlook and does not believe in metaphysics and mysticism. His approach towards political question is, therefore, not religious or sentimental. Religion in its institutional form is repugnant to him as it is the bulwark of reaction and the defender of the *status quo*. Its function in society has been to make social inequalities less irksome to the lower classes. But he has no quarrel with that purer form of religious faith which inspires the conduct of individuals. He, however, believes in ethical social conduct and has a deep sense of human values. He has faith in ideals of social progress. He believes in planning life for democracy and freedom. He is against totalitarianism and wants to find an equation between individual liberty and planned economic order. He holds that the economic freedom for the masses is not possible without the common ownership of the means of production but that this end should be achieved with as little sacrifice of personal freedom as possible.

INDIA AND ABROAD

*Japanese and the Kuomintang**

Japan's status has altered in the post war-period and she occupies to-day the same position that Germany occupied before the world war. Her greatest problem is to find employment for her rapidly growing population and as emmigration on large scale is not a feasible proposition for various reasons, she has come to the conclusion that the problem can be solved only by intensive industrialisation. But as Japan is deficient in the essential raw materials she is under the necessity of wresting colonies which are rich in basic raw materials and which may provide a market for her goods. This is why she has coveted the possession of Manchuria and Eastern Mongolia in which she has always claimed special interests.

Her earlier efforts were only partially successful as they were largely checkmated by the imperialist powers of Europe. The Great War, however, presented a unique opportunity for the realisation of her dreams and she made the fullest use of the war time for materialising her expansionist policy and for outstripping her commercial competitions in the Far East. She presented the famous 21 demands to China in 1915, the essence of which was the establishment of a virtual protectorate in China, under Japan's tutelage. She could not, however, keep to herself the fruits of her labours and at the Washington Conference was forced to return Shantung to China and to give up or revise her 21 demands. She was obliged to sign a treaty by which she bound herself to respect China's integrity and sovereignty.

These proceedings were regarded by China's militarists as a national disgrace. But one good result was obtained by Japan. The conference fixed the naval ration at 5:5:3 (3 being Japan) and Japan built her armament upto the limit allowed by the treaty while the USA neglected her new opportunities.

The result was that Japan's military power was greatly augmented and today no single power can resist Japanese arms in South-Eastern Asia.

* Congress Socialist, April 11, 1936.

This naturally emboldened Japan's militarists to put their aggressive plans into execution. They had always cherished dreams of building a vast empire and their leaders had drawn up careful plans of Asiatic conquest.

The army in Japan plays an important role in shaping the policy of the State. It is not subject to the control of Parliament and it does not tolerate any Government interference in its internal affairs. Its leader, General (now Baron) Araki stands for the abolition of the Parliamentary system and the establishment of an open military dictatorship. He has defined Japan's mission in Asia as one of the spreading Imperial virtue (Japanese *Kodokai*) which when translated into plain language, simply means 'making territorial conquests'. Just as *Weng Tao* (lingly way) is stated to be the code of political morality on which the new State of Manchukuo is formed in the same way '*Kodokai*' (Imperial virtue) is the moral principle which according to Araki, must form the conduct of the Japanese Nation in every sphere of its activity. According to this principle, public welfare must always take precedence over private welfare and as public welfare demand that peace should be established in Asia, Japan, an apostle of peace, must come forward to fulfill its mission and give quiet and pace to Mangolia and other centres of disorder in the Far-East by bringing these territories under its wings.

Thus it is in the interests of public peace that Japan embarks upon its military plan. Japan boasts of many an act of self-sacrifice in the interests of peace.

This demagoguery can deceive no one. We all know that Japan wants to occupy a dominant position in China. She is gradually freeing herself from her dependence on other countries for her supply of raw materials and is coming more and more to depend for it on China. She is, therefore, extremely nervous when she finds any European power interfering in Chinese affairs. She regards China as her special preserve and is determined to exclude all possible rivals from this field. She also wants a free hand in the Pacific area. It was for this reason that she seceded from the League of Nations, declared the Washington treaty to be absolute and withdrew her delegation from the Naval Conference when her claim for naval parity was rejected.

The militarists began to execute their plans as the opportunities presented themselves. In 1931, they seized Manchuria; in 1933, the province of Jehol; in the same year under the Tangku armistice agreement a strip of territory south of the Great Wall was demilitarised. Further inroads were made early in 1935. Chanar was attacked but the troops were later withdrawn after an understanding with the Chinese government. In June 1935, the demilitarised zone was extended to include Peking and Tientsin. The military aggression was held in check for some time because

of certain unfavourable circumstances. The Finance Minister, *Takahashi* (since murdered) was opposed to a policy of increasing a military expenditure. Being a representative of that section of the Japanese bourgeoisie which has suffered heavily as a result of the boycott of Japanese goods at the time of the Shanghai incident in 1932, he was opposed to any military aggression in China and favoured instead a peaceful economic penetration in co-operation with Chinese capitalists. In this he was supported by the Okada government, which was opposed to the Araki group and which was taking measures to control the army. The cabinet decided to proceed with the economic development of North China by means of joint Sino-Japanese enterprises.

The militarists had no choice but to stay their hands and participate in the promotion of such schemes. This is why we find Major General Doihara, chief of the Mukden military mission, collaborating in July last year with the Finance Ministry and the Ministry of Industry in projecting a giant development concern for the economic exploitation of North China with the help of Sino-Japanese capital.

But at the same time they were making preparations for another *coup*. The Peiping Political Council, the highest executive organ of North China, was abolished as a result of the Japanese army's ultimatum and its place was taken by Peiping Economic Society. The Japanese army also obtained the appointment of Tsung-Anang, an advocate of co-operation with Japan, as the commander of Tientsin. But the subtle moves of Great Britain in the Italo-Abyssinian conflict and China made the militarists impatient and they started on their old game again.

The visit of Sir Frederick Leith-Ross, the Chief Economic Advisor of Great Britain, to China was resented by the General Staff. It was given out that he was sent on a mission of investigation but the principal object of his visit was the promotion of an international loan to China. His visit to China synchronised with the introduction of certain currency reforms by the Nanking government. The basis of China's currency was altered under a decree issued on November 4, 1935. China went off silver and adopted a paper currency. It was suspected in Japan that these changes were introduced at the suggestion of the British expert.

These moves of Great Britain enraged the Japanese militarists who towards the end of October last presented a series of demands to China which were accepted without demur. They also started autonomy movement. Efforts were begun to establish the autonomous federation of five provinces in North China. An autonomous government in East Hopei was soon inaugurated under Ju-King. The autonomous movement impaired China's international credit and thus the British proposal for an international loan could not be carried into effect.

In December last under an arrangement was a party, the autonomous political council of Chahar and Hopei was established with General Sun-che-Yuan as Chairman.

The autonomy movement has not yet spread over the provinces. The attempt to establish an autonomous regime in the province of Shantung proved abortive as its governor, Han-foochoo, took prompt measures to suppress such movement.

Such is the brief history of Japan's military aggression in China. At present there is a lull in the situation because the militarists are engaged in solving certain domestic problems. As soon as they feel themselves free, they will again set to work and accomplish their ambitious plans and conquests.

Let us now examine the record of the national government of China and see what steps they took from time to time to stem the rising tide of Japanese aggression. They have always claimed that their policy has always been of consistent resistance against Japan but the claim when examined in the light of history is found untenable. The oft-repeated solemn pledges of Chinese statesmen and the *Kuomintang* to resist Japanese aggression have been violated again and again. The National government never made any honest effort to organise a most determined resistance. Conscious of its military weakness, it freely recognised that single-handed it would not successfully fight Japanese imperialism and most properly laid stress on the formation of a broad united front. They always excluded the communists and other radical elements from their consideration. They had in mind only the rival Canton group and such of the war lords as were inimical to the national government.

Although Wang Ching Wie, the late premier, accuses the Communists of not co-operating with the National government and of exploiting the situation to their own advantage, yet we know that in the past and on the present occasion they have made proposals of peace to the Nanking government for presenting a united front to the enemy.

Only in August last, the Communist Party of China issued an appeal for establishing a united front to resist Japanese aggression. It expressed its readiness to give up its counter offensive and to cooperate on any terms provided the National government in its turn ceased to wage war against them. The CP's slogan is "Fight unitedly against the foreign enemy, in spite of the internal discord." It has also issued appeal to all sections of people to unite in this hour of national calamity and to fight as one man against the common enemy.

But has there been any response to this appeal by the National government? No. It is absolutely certain that it will under no case agree to co-operate with the Communists even for the defence of China.

We need not feel surprised at the attitude of the National Government. It stands for reaction today. It has renounced its revolutionary path and have given the go-by to the free principles of Dr. Sun Yet Sen. In its view its foremost task today is not to fight foreign imperialism but to fight the social revolution within its own territories. The Chinese revolution has indeed reached a high stage when the bourgeoisie has ceased to be revolutionary force. The Chinese bourgeoisie has definitely gone over to the camp of the counter-revolution and is today concerned more with ruthless suppression of all the radical and revolutionary elements in China than with putting up a stout resistance against foreign aggression.

Resistance with diplomacy has been the declared policy of the national government. But it has relied too much on diplomacy and put up only feeble resistance for preventing the partition and enslavement of China.

At the time of the Manchurian coup in 1931, the government more or less satisfied itself with making appeals to the League of Nations for preventing the aggressor from impairing China's sovereignty. Chiang Kai-Shek urged the young marshal of Manchuria not to move even when the League failed China in its hour of trial and it was established that the League's machinery for peace and suppression of war was non-existent so far as China was concerned.

Again at the time of the Shanghai incident in 1932, Chiang actually ordered the general of the Nineteenth Route Army to withdraw from Chapei in compliance with the demand of the Japanese naval commander. He issued a funny proclamation of an ambiguous character and retired to Loyang. At Loyang, he called the National Calamity Conference which simply ended in making an appeal to the Lytton Commission.

But the General of the Nineteenth Route Army was neither a warlord nor a tool in the hands of Chiang. He refused to abandon his position in obedience to Chiang and offered most stubborn resistance to the enemy for full 34 days until further defence in the absence of reinforcements became impossible. His soldiers fought so heroically that they won universal admiration and it cost Japanese arms to suffer loss of prestige. But all this could be possible because the soldiers were imbued with revolutionary zeal. They had played an important part in the revolution of 1926-27. The nucleus had received training from General Gallen, the Russian military advisor of the Kuomintang, and the rank and file had perhaps come into the influence of Communist propaganda.

Again at the time of Jehol campaign in 1933, when there was a nation wide demand that the national government should temporarily suspend its hostility against the Reds and should lend its military support for resisting Japanese aggression, Chiang did not follow the only course which could have saved China from dismemberment. His best forces remained engaged

in fighting the Reds because he regarded the domestic problems as more grave than the question of foreign invasion. The slogan of the National government has been "First settle with the internal enemy and then deal with the external foe." It regards the extermination of "Communist banditry" as *sine qua non* to effective resistance against Japan. Chiang, of course made heroic gestures, expressed his readiness for supreme self-sacrifice to save the nation and proclaimed that China would resist to the last man. But he did not raise even his little finger to defend the sovereignty of China.

Rather in the success of the Japanese coup he saw a chance of removing from his path one of his potential rivals. As a matter of fact, he had already come to tacit understanding with Japanese militarists who had given a threat that if he did not keep quiet the Japanese army would seize also the strategic points in Central China.

The same game is being played again by Chiang. To the representatives of students who met him in a conference to protest against the autonomy of Hopei and Chahar, Chiang is reported to have said that the Government would not sign any agreement derogatory to China's territorial and sovereign rights! He has himself appointed the potential Council of Hopei and Chahar just to save himself from the charge of open surrender to Japan. It is true that he will literally fulfil the promise that he has made to students. He will in no case sign a document acknowledging Japanese protectorate over North China, nor has he been so far asked to do so. He did not do so in the case of Manchuria and Jehol. He has not upto this time acknowledged the independence of Manchukuo though now it has been laid down as one of the terms of the new Treaty that is being negotiated.

In short, the part played by Chiang during the years 1931-36 has been inglorious. The only course which can enable the National government to save China from the impending catastrophe is for it to suspend its hostilities against the Communists, to form as a broad united front as possible and make a clarion call to the nation to fight Japanese imperialism. But such a course will not recommend itself to the reactionary Government of Chiang Kai Shek. Its eyes have been sealed by narrow class interests and the voice of reason has been hushed so that the imperial virtue of Japan may easily spread itself over North China and Japan may once more take up.

*Suppressing Communist Banditry in China.**

This is the first volume of the "China Today" Series that has been projected under the editorship of Tang Leang-Li, a Chinese author of repute. The editor has acted as political private secretary to several eminent revolutionary leaders in China and thus has had rare opportunities of studying political events of that unfortunate country.

A German version of the book under review has also been published perhaps because the military campaigns were till lately being conducted under the direction of General Von Seeckt, the German Military Adviser to Chiang-kai-shek. The second of the series entitled "China's Problems and Their Solution" by Wang Ching Wei, the late premier and successor of Dr. Sunyat Sen in the party leadership, has also come out and more volumes are in preparation.

The name of the author is not given but the likelihood is that the editor of the series himself is the writer of the book because chapters II, III, & IV have been reproduced almost *verbatim*.

The book contains much valuable information about the history of the Communist movement in China. It gives the history of the birth and rise of the Communist movement in China and describes the organisation of the party and some of its more important activities. It tells us how a united front pact was worked out between the Communist party and the Kuo-min-Tang in 1923 and how in the course of Chinese revolution in 1926-27 the alliance was terminated, the Communists were expelled from the Kuo-min-Tang and a purging movement was inaugurated. The Communists raised an insurrection and started peasant revolts. They gradually obtained control of certain areas and in 1931 established a provisional Government of the Chinese-Soviet Republic at Juichin in the province of Kiangsi. The National Government, therefore, organised military expedi-

* Suppressing Communist Banditry In China: ("China Today" series No. 1). Pp. 110. and several illustrations. Published by the China United Press, Shanghai. Published in Congress Socialist, April 25, 1936.

tions against them to recover those areas. The book under review describes these expeditions and accounts for the failure of some of them. It further describes punitive measures adopted for the safety of the Republic and the economic measures taken to rehabilitate the areas recovered from the Communists.

The book, as is evident from its title, suffers from propagandist tendencies. It is usual for the opponents of the Chinese Communists to describe them as 'Bandits' or 'Red Bandits' but writers of eminence, who cannot be accused of any partiality for Communism or Chinese Soviets speak of Soviet China as a State. Lord Lytton in his report on the Japanese invasion into Manchuria writes that "Communism in China has become an actual rival of the National Government and that it possesses its own law, army and government and its own territorial sphere of action." Again, the New Republic gives the following account of Soviet China in its issue of September 27, 1933: "The Communists had maintained a stable government, a state bank of issue, an arms factory and a school system that had made immense progress towards its goal of providing universal free education."

Correspondents of the Chinese papers were invited to visit area that had been held by 'Communist Bandits'. To their surprise they found that inspite of the ravages of invading army, the Soviet regions were measurably more prosperous than adjoining regions ruled by respectable War-Lords. The harvests were bigger, the taxes lower, the dyke along the river banks much higher. According to the Times there is probably less corruption in the red districts than in any other area of equal size in China.

The fact that the Chinese Soviets have successfully repulsed all the military expeditions of the National Government, backed by some Imperialist Powers, is a convincing proof of the fact that the Soviets certainly do not deserve the name of 'Bandits'. The Sovietization of a large area does certainly represent a genuine revolt of the Chinese peasantry against the oppression of military Governors and Landlords. The Agrarian policy of the Communist leaders has been mainly responsible for the success of their regime.

True, the 'Big push' organised by Chiang early in 1934 succeeded in the sense that the Soviet areas in Kiangsi were regained but we must not forget that these places were abandoned by the Communists themselves to avoid blockade which was organised against them. The reds then pushed Westwards in the province of Szechuan and on the line of their march established many Soviet Districts.

It was after an eight months' drive organised under the personal supervision of Chiang that the Nanking Government succeeded in driving them to the Northern part of Szechuan but they have now spread over

Shensi and Kansu provinces in the North-West. It is reported that 'no fewer than 23 districts in Northern Shensi are already in their hands and that they have seized Tsingchow in the Kansu province, an important centre on the main highway between Sianfu and Lanchow, severing communications between China and points West of the Shensi border.'

The latest reports go to show that they are active in Shensi as well and have seized a few districts there.

At the present moment about 500,000 Government troops are stationed in the North-West to fight the reds.

But in spite of its strenuous efforts for full five years to suppress the Communists, the Nanking Government has not succeeded in achieving its objects.

Chiang has said that the problem of suppressing communism is only three-tenth military and seven-tenth administrative. His government has accordingly introduced certain economic and administrative measures in the forefront of which is the new land policy of the Government. But these measures do not go far enough to be of much service to it under the present serious agrarian situation in China. The malady is grave and calls for the application of radical measures but it seems that the Nanking Government has not the capacity to solve the fundamental problems of China.

The psychological and economic factors are all working in favour of the Communists and it seems that sooner or later the victory will be theirs.

India Versus Commonwealth

It is distasteful for me to enter into a public controversy with Pandit Nehru for whom I have the greatest respect and affection. But since he has honoured me by addressing his broadcast speech to me among others, I shall be failing in my duty if I were to keep silent at the moment and not tell him and the public with candour as to what I feel all about it. Some of the clarifications he has made were unnecessary so far as I am concerned. I know that the Commonwealth is not a super-state and that the right to secede is there. I am prepared to concede that if it were desirable to remain in the Commonwealth, the Prime Minister has certainly secured the best terms for us. The question is not whether the membership of the Commonwealth fetters in theory our right to independent action, but whether its membership is of lasting advantage to India and whether it will promote the cause of peace and progress in the world. That is the criterion with which I shall judge the issue. I am sorry to say that apart from indulging in platitudes, Pandit Nehru has not made any effort to tell us in what manner the membership will help us in promoting these worthy objects. I am not an isolationist, nor have I any racial prejudices against any people. I have great respect for the British people, and I admire some of their noble qualities.

I regard narrow nationalism as the greatest curse of the age. Further, I want an era of co-operation and understanding to be opened with Britain also, if that were possible. In short, if I were convinced that India's interests and declared objectives as looked at in the world context would be better served by remaining in the Commonwealth, I would unhesitatingly vote for it. But I am sorry to say that I have in vain searched for a single argument in the Prime Minister's recent speeches which may lead me to revise my opinion.

The Prime Minister characterises the recent controversy as an empty debate, and still wants the Constituent Assembly and the AICC to waste their precious time over their question. I am pained to find that Pandit

* National Herald, May 18, 1949.

Nehru wants to dismiss this vital issue in such a summary fashion. He forgets that there was a great debate over this question in this country lasting over a period of 22 years. It was one of the live issue over which a split took place in the Congress at Surat in 1907, and the breach was not healed until 1916. Again it was this issue which led Pandit Nehru, in co-operation with others, to found the Independence of India League in 1928. It was this issue against which Pandit Nehru did not hesitate to range himself against Gandhiji and Motilalji at the Calcutta Congress in 1928. It was this issue the advocacy of which made Pandit Nehru the idol of the Indian youth in 1929. Surely, Pandit Nehru was not swayed by anti-British sentiments when he made a powerful plea in support of complete severance with the British connection. The truth is that there were weighty reasons in support of the proposition. We also did not stand in those days for isolationism. So, if we are now to give up our cherished convictions, which I for one have consistently held ever since my student days, I would like to know the solid reasons which necessitate a change of front today to adjust our policies with the needs of the moment.

I may be pardoned for stating that the effect produced by his broadcast was more than neutralised by his speech at the press conference. Every time that we have differed from him in recent years, he has, without giving any arguments, simply accused us of not being able to look beyond our nose, of being too much tied up with a changing past of our foundness for slogans. But that only proves his irritation with those who are known as leftists, and does not constitute any argument at all. He is free to ridicule us and abuse us if he so likes, but if the object is to carry conviction and convert the opponent, surely this is not the way. My respect for him is too great to allow me to indulge in cheap retorts, but I cannot refrain from saying that if some of us are too much tied up with our convictions and beliefs of the past 25 years of national struggle, in the course of which they were evolved and which even today seek fulfilment, the Prime Minister has too much tied himself up with the bureaucratic machine and other bad legacies of the British rule. He surmonises on the need and value of a dynamic way of thinking and action in this rapidly changing world, but the policies of his government have unmistakable marks of hesitancy and timidity. His government, if it does not stand for the *status quo*, is at best a government of compromise. His experience of office has only brought with it a growing uncertainty in his mind about the practical application of the great ideas he preached at one time. He loves to be vague both in speech and action. This explains his preference for an association which is vague and indefinite in character, rather than for a relationship which is concrete and definite. He wants to demonstrate that he is not an isolationist and seeks a loose alliance with those whom he has known and with whose views he has been too much absorbed.

CHORUS OF PRAISE

In the statement issued, I briefly stated my reasons for opposing the Commonwealth idea. A chorus of praise for Pandit Nehru from statesmen of member states of the Commonwealth has simply confirmed my view. The fish is in the net, and whatever may be the demands of constitutional theory, British diplomats will now start the game of entangling us more and more in European politics. If it is said that our membership would assure military protection, I would like to know as to who are our enemies against whom such protection can be given by the Commonwealth. All that important members of the Commonwealth do definitely belong to the Anglo-American bloc and support the Western Union and the Atlantic Pact and our association with the Commonwealth will not be conducive to the preservation of India's proclaimed policy of neutrality.

Pandit Nehru has referred us to the emergence of a new Asia, and has in its name called upon us to support the Commonwealth idea. But he has not explained in what way the commonwealth will have an adverse effect on our relationship with South-East Asia. Britain is definitely pursuing an imperialist policy in Malaya, and has aligned itself with Dutch and French imperialism. The forces that are shaping South-East Asian countries, and which will soon come to power, are definitely opposed to any special association with the Commonwealth. We have allowed ourselves to be classified and labelled, and others should not be blamed if they associate us with policies which may be distasteful to us.

A TRAGEDY

The Prime Minister feels that India will be able to ease the international situation more effectively by remaining in the Commonwealth than otherwise. It is too much to hope that India will be able to influence policies of Britain and other nations of the Commonwealth, as it evidenced by the fact that they have voted against India in the UNO on many vital issues. It is only our national pride and self-righteousness that makes us think so. We have neither the military nor the moral strength to perform this difficult task. We cannot trade for a long time in the name of Gandhiji unless we follow the path shown by him, and whatever little moral strength we had built up is being liquidated. India can only make a moral appeal to human conscience, and of this we are becoming more and more incapable.

It is a tragedy that for certain psychological reasons the nation is unable to put to the fullest use the undoubted great capacities for thought and action of Pandit Nehru. I would have loved to see our Prime Minister step out of the Commonwealth and look upon the world with a new angle.

